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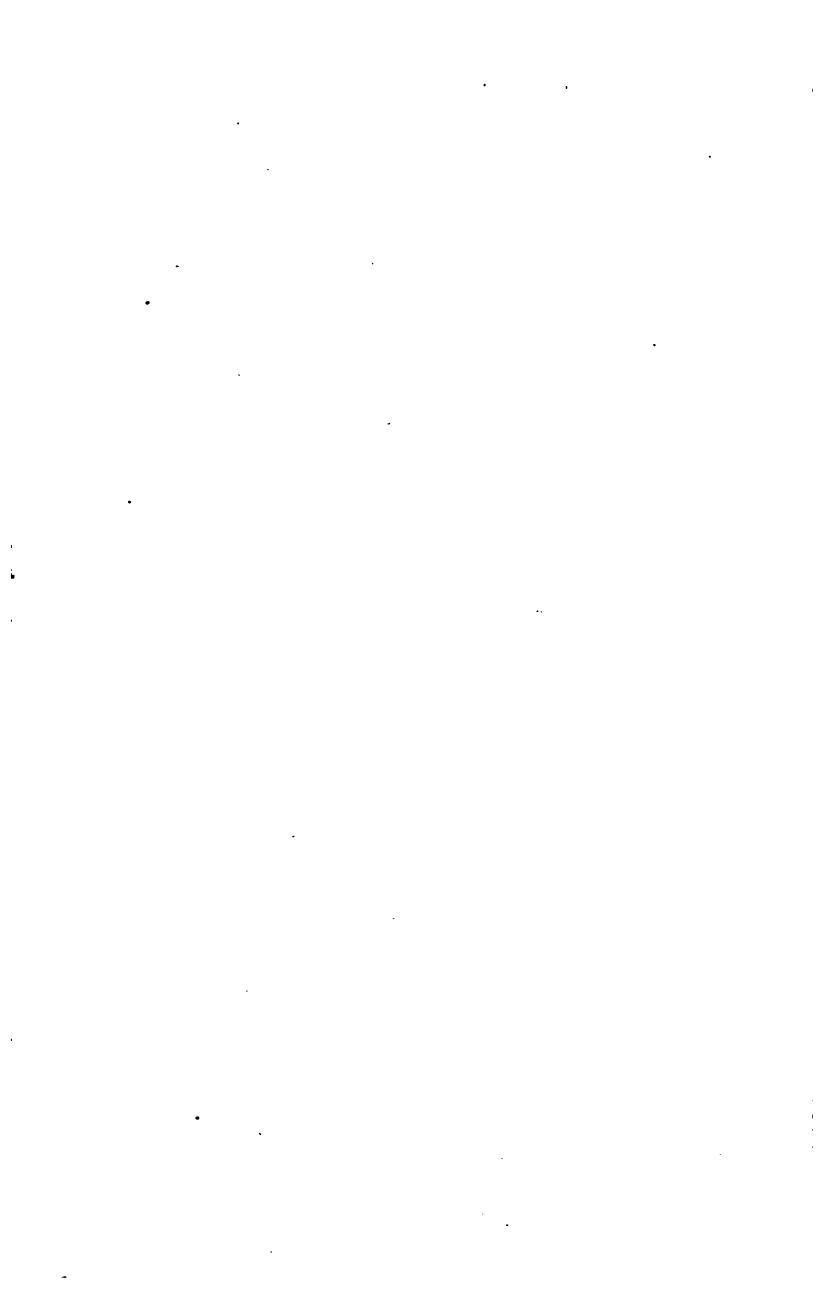
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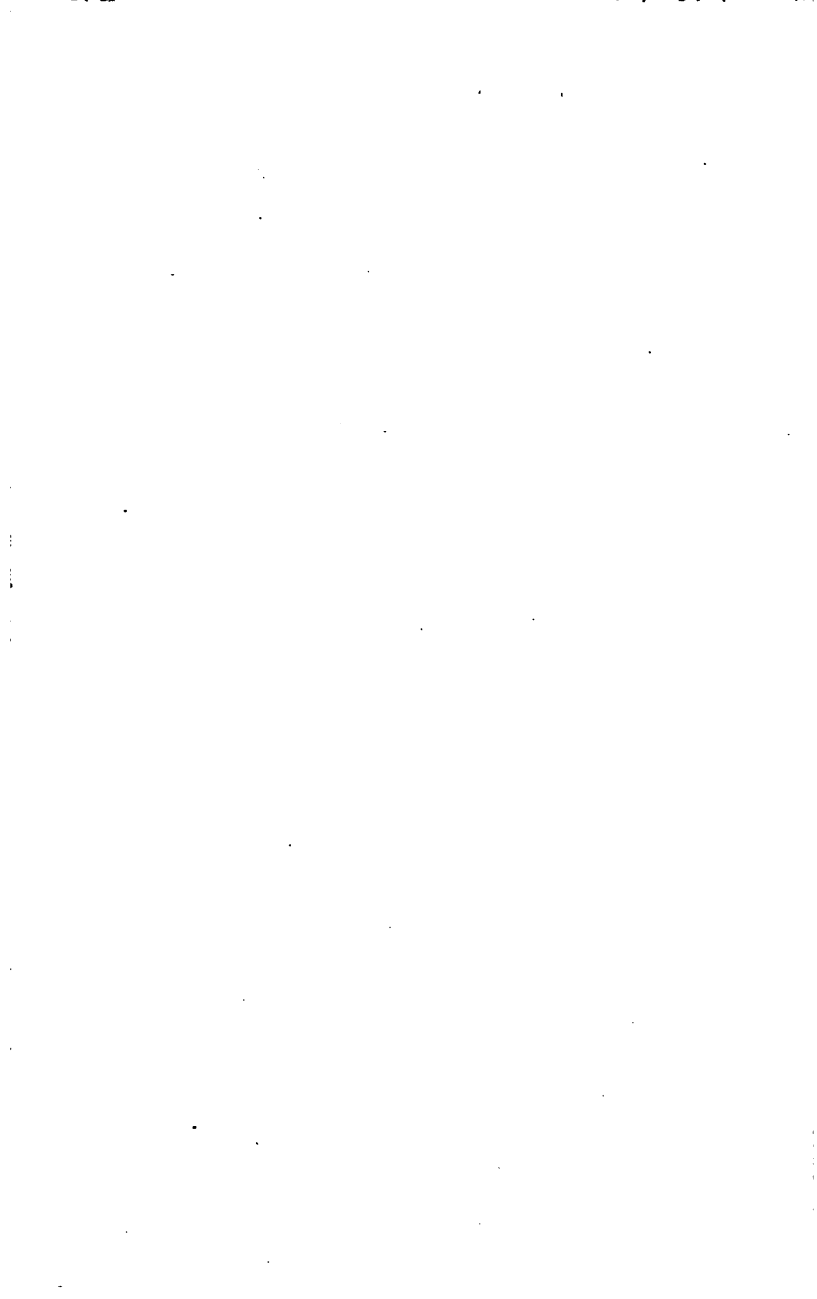
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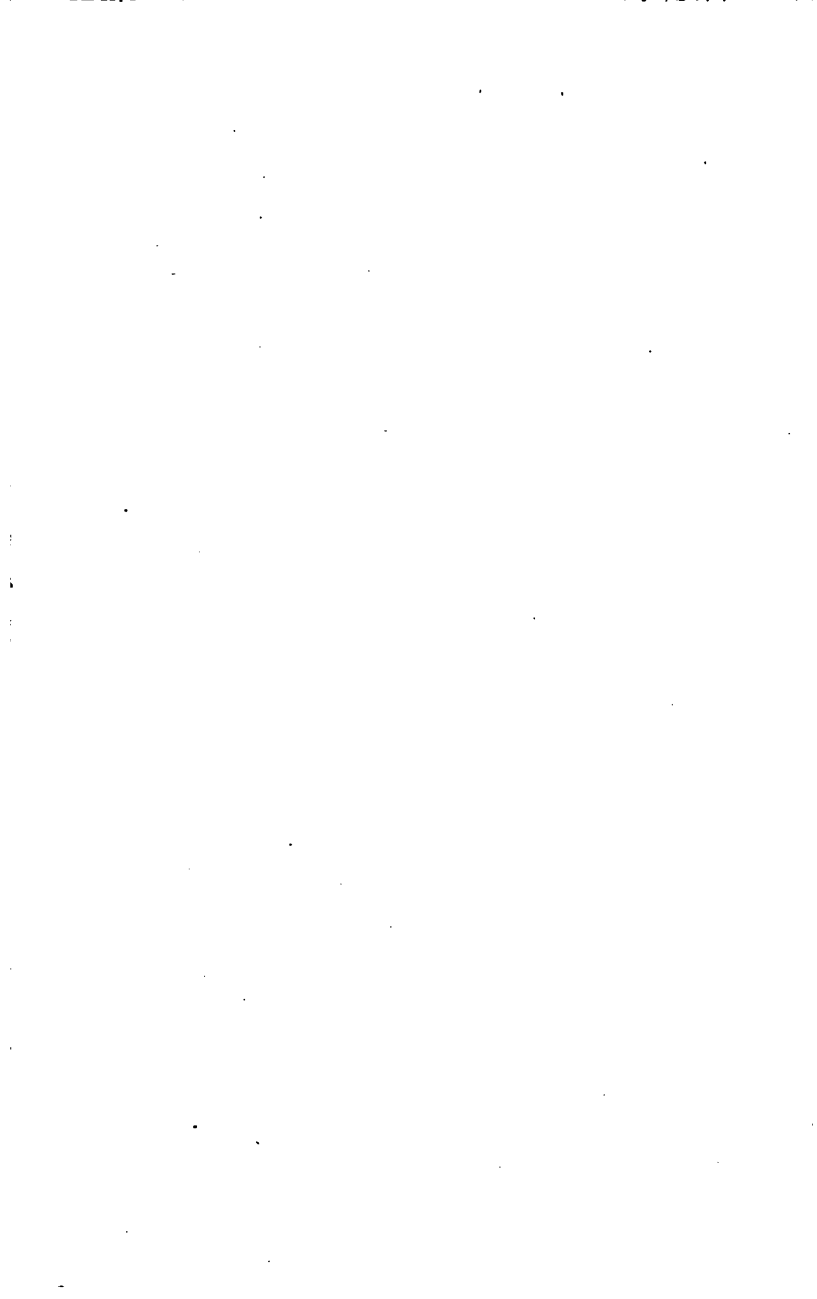
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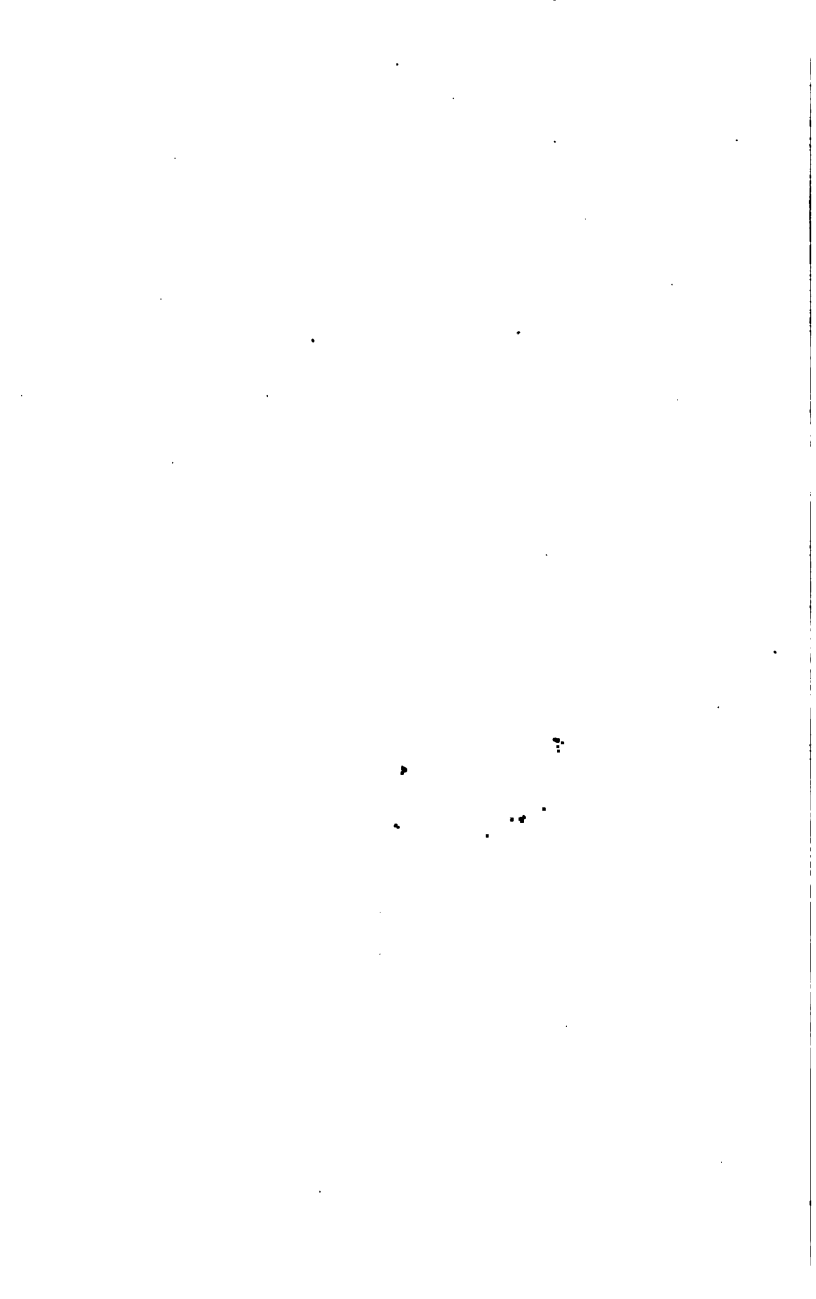
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HISTORY
OF THE
FRENCH REVOLUTION.

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PREFACE.

EVERY year, when I descend from my chair, at the close of my academic labours, when I see the crowd disperse,—another generation that I shall behold no more,—my mind is lost in inward contemplation.

Summer comes on ; the town is less peopled, the streets are less noisy, the pavement grows more sonorous around my Pantheon. Its large black and white slabs resound beneath my feet.

I commune with my own mind. I interrogate myself as to my teaching, my history, and its all-powerful interpreter,—the spirit of the Revolution.

It possesses a knowledge of which others are ignorant. It contains the secret of all bygone times. In it alone France was conscious of herself. When, in a moment of weakness, we may appear forgetful of our own worth, it is to this point we should recur in order to seek and recover ourselves again. Here, the inextinguishable spark, the profound mystery of life, is ever glowing within us.

The Revolution lives in ourselves,—in our souls ; it has no outward monument. Living spirit of France, where shall I seize thee, but within myself?—The governments that have succeeded each other, hostile in all other respects, appear at least agreed in this, to resuscitate, to awaken remote and departed ages. But thee they would have wished to bury. Yet why? Thou, thou alone dost live.

Thou livest! I feel this truth perpetually impressed upon me at the present period of the year, when my teaching is suspended,—when labour grows fatiguing, and the season

becomes oppressive, Then I wander to the Champ de Mars, I sit me down on the parched grass, and inhale the strong breeze that is wafted across the arid plain.

The Champ de Mars! This is the only monument that the Revolution has left. The Empire has its Column, and engrosses almost exclusively the arch of Triumph; royalty has its Louvre, its Hospital of Invalids; the feudal church of the twelfth century is still enthroned at Notre Dame: nay, the very Romans have their Imperial Ruins, the Thermæ of the Cæsars!

And the Revolution has for her monument—empty space.

Her monument is this sandy plain, flat as Arabia. A tumulus on either hand, resembling those which Gaul was accustomed to erect,—obscure and equivocal testimonial to her heroes' fame.

The Hero! do you mean him who founded the bridge of Jena? No, there is one here greater even than he, more powerful and more immortal, who fills this immensity.

"What God? We know not. But here a God doth dwell."

Yes, though a forgetful generation dares to select this spot for the theatre of its vain amusements, borrowed from a foreign land,—though the English race-horse may gallop insolently over the plain, a mighty breath yet traverses it, such as you nowhere else perceive; a soul, and a spirit omnipotent.

And though that plain be arid, and the grass be withered, it will, one day, renew its verdure.

For in that soil is profoundly mingled the fruitful sweat of their brows who, on a sacred day, piled up those hills,—that day when, aroused by the cannon of the Bastille, France from the North and France from the South came forward and embraced; that day when three millions of heroes in arms rose with the unanimity of one man, and decreed eternal peace.

Alas! poor Revolution. How confidently on thy first day didst thou invite the world to love and peace. "O my enemies," didst thou exclaim, "there are no longer any enemies!" Thou didst stretch forth thy hand to all, and offer them thy cup to drink to the peace of nations—But they would not.

And even when they advanced to inflict a treacherous wound, the sword drawn by France was the sword of peace. It was to deliver the nations, and give them true peace—liberty,

that she struck the tyrants. Dante asserts Eternal Love to be the founder of the gates of hell. And thus the Revolution wrote *Peace* upon her flag of war.

Her heroes, her invincible warriors, were the most pacific of human beings. Hoche, Marceau, Desaix, and Kleber, are deplored by friends and foes, as the champions of peace ; they are mourned by the Nile, and by the Rhine, nay, by war itself, —by the inflexible Vendée.

France had so completely identified herself with this thought, that she did her utmost to restrain herself from achieving conquests. Every nation needing the same blessing—liberty,—and pursuing the same right, whence could war possibly arise ? Could the Revolution, which, in its principle, was but the triumph of right, the resurrection of justice, the tardy reaction of thought against brute force,—could it, without provocation, have recourse to violence ?

This utterly pacific, benevolent, loving character of the Revolution seems to-day a paradox :—so unknown is its origin, so misunderstood its nature, and so obscured its tradition, in so short a time !

The violent, terrible efforts which it was obliged to make, in order not to perish in a struggle with the conspiring world, has been mistaken for the Revolution itself by a blind, forgetful generation.

And from this confusion has resulted a serious, deeply-rooted evil, very difficult to be cured among this people ; the adoration of force.

The force of resistance, the desperate effort to defend unity, '93. They shudder, and fall on their knees.

The force of invasion and conquest, 1800 ; the Alps brought low, and the thunder of Austerlitz. They fall prostrate, and adore.

Shall I add, that, in 1815, with too much tendency to over-value force, and to mistake success for a judgment of God, they found at the bottom of their hearts, in their grief and their anger, a miserable argument for justifying their enemy. Many whispered to themselves, " they are strong, therefore they are just."

Thus, two evils, the greatest that can afflict a people, fell upon France at once. Her own tradition slipped away from

her, she forgot herself. And, every day more uncertain, paler, and more fleeting, the doubtful image of Right flitted before her eyes.

Let us not take the trouble to inquire why this nation continues to sink gradually lower, and becomes more weak. Attribute not its decline to outward causes ; let it not accuse either heaven or earth ; the evil is in itself.

The reason why an insidious tyranny was able to render it a prey to corruption is, that it was itself corruptible. Weak and unarmed, and ready for temptation, it had lost sight of the idea by which alone it had been sustained ; like a wretched man deprived of sight, it groped its way in a miry road ; it no longer saw its star. What ! the star of victory ? No, the sun of Justice and of the Revolution.

That the powers of darkness should have laboured throughout the earth to extinguish the light of France, and to smother Right, was natural enough. But, in spite of all their endeavours, success was impossible. The wonder is, that the friends of light should help its enemies to veil and extinguish it.

The party who advocate liberty have evinced, of late, two sad and serious symptoms of an inward evil. Let them permit a friend, a solitary writer, to tell them his entire mind.

A perfidious, an odious hand,—the hand of death,—has been offered and stretched out to them, and they have not withdrawn their own. They believed the foes of religious liberty might become the friends of political freedom. Vain scholastic distinctions, which obscured their view ! Liberty is liberty.

And to please their enemy, they have proved false to their friend—nay, to their own father, the grand eighteenth century. They have forgotten that that century had founded liberty on the enfranchisement of the mind—till then bound down by the flesh, bound by the material principle of the double incarnation, theological and political, kingly and sacerdotal. That century, that of the spirit, abolished the gods of flesh in the state and in religion, so that there was no longer any idol, and there was no god but God.

Yet why have sincere friends of liberty formed a league

with the party of religious tyranny? Because they had reduced themselves to a feeble minority. They were astonished at their own insignificance, and durst not refuse the advances of a great party which seemed to make overtures to them.

Our fathers did not act thus. They never counted their number. When Voltaire, a child, in the reign of Louis XIV. entered upon the perilous career of religious contention, he appeared to be alone. Rousseau stood alone, in the middle of the century, when, in the dispute between the Christians and the philosophers, he ventured to lay down the new dogma. He stood alone. On the morrow the whole world was with him.

If the friends of liberty see their numbers decreasing, they are themselves to blame. Not a few have invented a system of progressive refinement, of minute orthodoxy, which aims at making a party a sect,—a petty church. They reject first this, and then that; they abound in restrictions, distinctions, exclusions. Some new heresy is discovered every day.

For heaven's sake, let us dispute less about the light of Tabor, like besieged Byzantium—Mahomet II. is at our gates.

When the Christian sects became multiplied, we could find Jansenists, Molinists, &c., in abundance, but no longer any Christians; and so, the sects which are the offspring of the Revolution annul the Revolution itself; people became Constituents, Girondists, Montagnards; but the Revolutionists ceased to exist.

Voltaire is but little valued, Mirabeau is laid aside, Madame Roland is excluded, even Danton is not orthodox. What! must none remain but Robespierre and Saint-Just?

Without disowning what was in these men, without wishing to anticipate their sentence, let one word be sufficient here: If the Revolution rejects, condemns their predecessors, it rejects the very persons who gave it a hold upon mankind,—the very men who for a time imbued the whole world with a revolutionary spirit. If, on the other hand, it declares to the world its sympathy with their characters, and shews no more than the image of these two Apostles upon its altar, the conversion to its tenets will be slow, the French Propaganda will not have much to fear, and absolute governments may repose in peace.

Fraternity ! fraternity ! It is not enough to re-echo the word—to attract the world to our cause, as was the case at first. It must acknowledge in us a fraternal heart. It must be gained over by the fraternity of love, and not by the guillotine.

Fraternity ! Why who, since the creation, has not pronounced that word ? Do you imagine it was first coined by Robespierre or Mably ?

Every state of antiquity talked of fraternity ; but the word was addressed only to citizens,—to men ; the slave was but a thing. And in this case fraternity was exclusive and inhuman.

When slaves or freed-men govern the Empire,—when they are named Terence, Horace, Phedrus, Epictetus, it is difficult not to extend fraternity to the slave. “ Let us be brethren,” cries Christianity. But, to be a brother, one must first exist ; man had no being ; right and liberty alone constitute life. A theory from which these are excluded, is but a speculative fraternity between nought and nought.

“ Fraternity, or death,” as the reign of Terror subsequently exclaimed. Once more a brotherhood of slaves. Why, by atrocious derision, impart to such an union the holy name of liberty ?

Brethren who mutually fly from one another, who shudder when they meet, who extend, who withdraw a dead and icy hand. O odious and disgusting sight ! Surely, if anything ought to be free, it is the fraternal sentiment.

Liberty alone, as founded in the last century, has rendered fraternity possible. Philosophy found man without right, or rather a nonentity, entangled in a religious and political system, of which despotism was the base. And she said, “ Let us create man, let him be, by liberty.” No sooner was he created than he loved.

It is by liberty moreover, that our age, awakened and recalled to its true tradition, may likewise commence its work. It will no longer inscribe amongst its laws, “ Be my brother, or die ! ” But by a skilful culture of the best sentiments of the human soul, it will attain its ends in such a manner that all, without compulsion, shall wish to be brothers indeed. The state will realise its destiny, and be a fraternal initiation, an education,

a constant exchange of the spontaneous ideas of inspiration and faith, which are common to us all, and of the reflected ideas of science and meditation, which are found among thinkers.*

Such is the task for our age to accomplish. May it at last set about the work in earnest!

It would indeed be a melancholy reflection, if, instead of achieving something great for itself, its time were wasted in censuring that age—so renowned for its labours, and to which it is so immensely indebted. Our fathers, we must repeat, did all that it was necessary then to do,—began precisely as it was incumbent on them to begin.

They found despotism in heaven and on earth, and they instituted law. They found individual man disarmed, bare, unprotected, confounded, lost in a system of apparent unity, which was no better than common death. And in order that he might have no appeal, even to the supreme tribunal, the religious dogma of the day held him bound for the penalty of a transgression which he had not committed; this eminently carnal dogma supposed that injustice is transmitted with our blood from father to son.

It was necessary, above all things, to vindicate the rights of

* Initiation, education, government, are three synonymous words. Rousseau had some notion of this, when, speaking of the states of antiquity, and of the crowd of great men produced by that little city of Athens, he says, "They were less governments than the most fruitful systems of education that have ever been." Unfortunately, the age of Rousseau invoking only deliberate reason, and but little analysing the faculties of instinct, of *inspiration*, could not well discern the mutual connexion which constitutes all the mystery of education, initiation, and government. The masters of the Revolution, the philosophers, famous antagonists, and very subtle, excellent logicians, were endowed with every gift, except that profound simplicity which alone enables one to comprehend the child and the people. Therefore, the Revolution could not organise the grand revolutionary machine: I mean that which, better than laws, ought to found fraternity—*education*. That will be the work of the nineteenth century; it has already entered upon it, in feeble attempts. In my little book *The People*,¹ I have, as far as in me lay, vindicated the rights of instinct—of inspiration—against her aristocratic sister, reflection, the reasoning science, that pretends to be the queen of the world.

¹ See my translation of *Le Peuple* (London: Longman & Co., 1846), Part II., ch. v.

man, which were thus so cruelly outraged, and to reëstablish this truth, which, though obscured, was yet undeniable : " Man has rights, he is something ; he cannot be disowned or annulled, even in the name of God ; he is a responsible creature but for his own actions alone, for whatever good or evil he himself commits."

Thus does this false liability for the actions of others disappear from the world. The *unjust transmission of good*, perpetuated by the rights of the nobility ; the *unjust transmission of evil*, by original sin, or the civil brand of being descended from sinners, are effaced by the Revolution.

O men of the present age, is this the creed you tax with individualism—is this what you term an egotistical law ? But, remember, that without these rights of the individual, by which alone man was constituted, he really had no existence, was incapable of action, and man, therefore, could not fraternize. It was actually necessary to abolish the fraternity of death to found that of life.

Speak not of egotism. History will answer here, quite as strongly as logic. It was at the first moment of the Revolution, at the moment she was proclaiming the rights of the individual, it was then that the soul of France, far from shrinking, extended, embraced the whole world in sympathetic thought : then did she offer peace to all, and wish to participate with all her treasure,—liberty.

The moment of birth, the entrance upon a still dubious life, seems to justify a feeling of egotism in every being. We may observe that the newly-born infant, above all things, wishes to live, to prolong its existence. Yet, in the case before us, it was far otherwise. When young French Liberty first opened her eyes to the light, and uttered that earliest cry which transports every new creature,—“ I am ! ” even in that moment her thoughts were not confined to *self* ; she did not indulge in a selfish joy, she extended to mankind her life and her hope ; her first impulse, in her cradle, was to open her affectionate arms. “ I am ! ” she exclaimed to all nations ; “ O my brethren, you shall be also ! ”

In this lay her glorious error, her touching and sublime weakness : the Revolution, it must be confessed, commenced by loving everything.

She loved even her enemy,—England.

She loved, and long she strove to save, royalty—the key-stone of the abuses which she had just demolished. She wanted to save the Church ; she endeavoured to remain Christian, being wilfully blind to the contradiction of the old principle,—Arbitrary Grace, and of the new one,—Justice.

This universal sympathy which, at first, made her adopt, and indiscreetly mingle so many contradictory elements, led her to inconsistency,—to wish and not to wish, to do and undo, at the same time. Such is the strange result of our early assemblies.

The world has smiled at that work of hers : but let it not forget, that whatever was discordant in it, was partly owing to the too easy sympathy, to the indiscriminate benevolence which was the first feature in our Revolution.

Genius utterly humane ! I love to follow and watch its progress, in those admirable fêtes wherein a whole people, at once the actors and spectators, gave and received the impulse of moral enthusiasm ; wherein every heart expanded with all the sublimity of France,—of a country which, for its law, proclaimed the rights of humanity.

At the festival of the 14th of July, 1792, among the sacred images of Liberty and the Law,—in the civic procession,—in which figured, together with the magistrates, the representatives, the widows and orphans of those killed at the Bastille,—were seen divers emblems,—those of trades useful to men, instruments of agriculture, ploughs, sheaves, branches loaded with fruits ; and the bearers were crowned with ears of corn and green vine-leaves. But others also were seen in mourning, crowned with cypress ; they were carrying a table covered with crape, and, under the crape, a veiled sword,—that of the law ! A touching image ! Justice, showing her sword in mourning, was no longer distinguished from Humanity herself.

A year after, the 10th of August, 1793, a very different festival was celebrated. This one was heroic and gloomy. But the law had been mutilated ; the legislative power had been violated ; the judiciary power, unguaranteed and annulled, was the slave of violence. They durst no longer show the sword ; it was no longer that of Justice ; the eye could have borne it no longer.

A thing to be told to everybody, and which it is but too easy to prove, is, that the humane and benevolent period of our Revolution had for its actors the very people, the whole people, —everybody. And the period of violence, the period of sanguinary deeds, into which danger afterwards thrust it, had for actors but an inconsiderable, an extremely small number of men.

That is what I have found established and verified, either by written testimony, or by such as I have gathered from the lips of old men.

The remarkable exclamation of a man who belonged to the Faubourg Saint-Antoine will never die: "We were all of us at the 10th of August, and not one at the 2nd of September."

Another thing which this history will render most conspicuous, and which is true of every party, is, that the people were generally much better than their leaders. The further I have searched, the more generally have I found that the more deserving class was ever underneath, buried among the utterly obscure. I have also found that those brilliant, powerful speakers, who expressed the thoughts of the masses, are usually but wrongfully considered as the sole actors. The fact is, that they rather received than communicated the impulse. The chief actor is the people. In order to find and restore the latter to its proper position, I have been obliged to reduce to their proportions those ambitious puppets whom they had set in motion, and in whom, till now, people fancied they saw, and have sought for, the secret transactions of history.

This sight, I must confess, struck me with astonishment. In proportion as I entered more deeply into this study, I observed that the mere party leaders, those heroes of the prepared scene, neither foresaw nor prepared anything, that they were never the first proposers of any grand measure,—more particularly of those which were the unanimous work of the people in the outset of the Revolution.

Left to themselves, at those decisive moments, by their pretended leaders, they found out what was necessary to be done, and did it.

Great, astonishing results! But how much greater was the

heart which conceived them ! The deeds themselves are as nothing in comparison. So astonishing, indeed, was that greatness of heart, that the future may draw upon it for ever, without fearing to exhaust its resources. No one can approach its contemplation, without retiring a better man. Every soul dejected, or crushed with grief, every human or national heart has but to look there in order to find comfort : it is a mirror wherein humanity, in beholding itself, becomes once more heroic, magnanimous, disinterested ; a singular purity, shrinking from the contamination of lucre as from filth, appears to be the characteristic glory of all.

I am endeavouring to describe to-day that epoch of unanimity, that holy period, when a whole nation, free from all party distinction, as yet a comparative stranger to the opposition of classes, marched together under a flag of brotherly love. Nobody can behold that marvellous unanimity, in which the self-same heart beat together in the breasts of twenty millions of men, without returning thanks to God. These are the sacred days of the world—thrice happy days for history. For my part, I have had my reward, in the mere narration of them. Never, since the composition of my *Maid of Orleans*, have I received such a ray from above, such a vivid inspiration from Heaven.

But as “our thread of life is of a mingled yarn,” whilst I enjoyed so much happiness in reviving the annals of France, my own peace has been disturbed for ever. I have lost him who so often narrated the scenes of the Revolution to me, him whom I revered as the image and venerable witness of the Grand Age, that is, of the eighteenth century. I have lost my father, with whom I had lived all my life,—forty-eight years.

When that blow fell upon me, I was lost in contemplation. I was elsewhere, hastily realizing this work, so long the object of my meditation. I was at the foot of the Bastille, taking that fortress, and planting our immortal banner upon its towers. That blow came upon me, unforeseen, like a shot from the Bastille.

Many of these important questions, which have obliged me to fathom deeply the foundations of my faith, have been investigated by me during the most awful circumstances that can attend human life, between death and the grave,—when the

survivor, himself partly dead, has been sitting in judgment between two worlds. Then I resumed my course, even to the conclusion of this work, whilst death and life had equal claims upon my mind. I struggled to keep my heart in the closest communion with justice, strengthening myself in my faith by my very bereavements and my hopes ; and, in proportion as my own household gods were shattered, I clung to the home of my native land.

INTRODUCTION.

FIRST PART.

ON THE RELIGION OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

SECTION I.

IS THE REVOLUTION CHRISTIAN OR ANTI-CHRISTIAN ?

I DEFINE the Revolution,—The advent of the Law, the resurrection of Right, and the reaction of Justice.

Is the Law, such as it appeared in the Revolution, conformable, or contrary, to the religious law which preceded it? In other words, is the Revolution Christian or Anti-Christian ?

This question, historically, logically, precedes every other. It reaches and penetrates even those which might be believed to be exclusively political. All the institutions of the civil order which the Revolution met with, had either emanated from Christianity, or were traced upon its forms, and authorised by it. Religious or political, the two questions are deeply, inextricably intermingled. Confounded in the past, they will reappear to-morrow as they really are, one and identical.

Socialists' disputes, ideas which seem to-day new and paradoxical, were discussed in the bosom of Christianity and of the Revolution. There are few of those ideas into which the two systems have not deeply entered. The Revolution especially, in her rapid apparition, wherein she realised so little, saw, by the flashes of the lightning, unknown depths, abysses of the future.

Therefore, in spite of the developments which theories have been able to take, notwithstanding new forms and new words, I see upon the stage but two grand facts, two principles, two actors and two persons, Christianity and the Revolution.

He who would describe the crisis whence the new principle emerged and made room for itself, cannot dispense with inquiring what relation it bears to its predecessor, in *what respects* it continues or outsteps, sways or abolishes it:—a serious problem, which nobody has yet encountered face to face.

It is curious to see so many persons approaching, and yet nobody willing to look at this question seriously. Even those who believe, or pretend to believe, the question obsolete, show plainly enough, by their avoiding it, that it is extant, present, perilous, and formidable. If you are not afraid of the pit, why do you shrink back? Why do you turn aside your head? There is here, apparently, a power of dangerous attraction, at which the brain grows giddy.

Our great politicians have also, we must say, a mysterious reason for *avoiding* these questions. They believe that Christianity is still a great party, that it is better to treat it cautiously. Why fall out with it? They prefer to smile at it, keeping themselves at a distance, and to act politely towards it, without compromising themselves. They believe, moreover, that the religious world is generally very simple, and that to keep it in play, it is merely sufficient to praise the Gospel a little. That does not engage them very deeply. The Gospel, in its gentle morality, contains hardly any of the dogmas which make Christianity a religion so positive, so assuming, and so absorbing, so strong in its grasp upon man. All the philosophers, of every religion, of every philosophy, would subscribe, without difficulty, to the precepts of the Gospel. To say, with the Mahometans, that Jesus is a great prophet, is not being a Christian.

Does the other party expostulate? Does the zeal of God which devours them, fill their hearts with serious indignation against this trifling of politicians? Not so; they declaim much, but only about minor matters, being but too happy so long as they are not molested in what is fundamental. The conduct of politicians, often trifling and occasionally savouring of irony, does not grieve them much. They pretend not to

understand the question. Ancient as that party is, it has still a strong hold upon the world. Whilst their opponents are occupied in their parliamentary displays, ever rolling their useless wheel and exhausting themselves without advancing, that old party still holds possession of all that constitutes the basis of life—the family and the domestic hearth, woman, and, through her instrumentality, the child. They who are the most hostile to this party, nevertheless abandon to its influence all they love, and all that makes them happy. They surrender to it every day the infant, man unarmed and feeble, whose mind, still dreaming, is incapable of defending itself. This gives the party many chances. Let it but keep and fortify this vast, mute, undisputed empire, its case is all the better ; it may grumble and complain, but it will take good care never to drive politicians to a statement of their belief.

Politicians on either side! connivance against connivance! Where shall I turn to find the friends of truth?

The friends of the holy and the just? Does the world then contain no one who cares for God?

Children of Christianity, you who claim to be faithful, we here adjure you. Thus to pass by God in silence, to omit in every disputation what is truly the faith, as something too dangerous, offensive to the ear—is this religion?

One day, when I was conversing with one of our best bishops on the contradictions between Grace and Justice, which is the very basis of the Christian faith, he stopped me and said: “ This question luckily no longer engages the attention of men. On that subject we enjoy repose and silence. Let us maintain it, and never go beyond. It is superfluous to return to that discussion.”

Yet that discussion, my lord, is no less than the question, whether Grace and Salvation through Christ, the only basis of Christianity, is reconcileable with justice ; it is to examine whether such a dogma is founded on justice, whether it can subsist. Nothing lasts against justice. Does, then, the duration of Christianity appear to you an accessory question?

I well know, that after a debate of several centuries, after heaps of distinctions and scholastic subtleties had been piled together, without throwing light on the question, the pope silenced all parties, judging, like my bishop, that the question

might be laid aside with no hope of settling the matter, and leaving justice and injustice in the arena to make up matters as they could.

This is much more than has ever been done by the greatest enemies of Christianity. To say the least, they have always been respectful enough to examine the question, and not put it out of court without deigning to grant it a hearing.

For how could we, who have no inimical feelings, reject examination and debate? Ecclesiastical prudence, the trifling of politicians, and their avoiding the question, do not suit us in the least. We owe it to Christianity to see how far it may be reconcileable with the Revolution, to know what regeneration the old principle may find in the bosom of the new one. We have desired fervently and heartily that it would transform itself and live again! In what sense can this transformation be achieved? What hope ought we to entertain that it is possible?

As the historian of the Revolution, I cannot, without this inquiry, advance one step. But even though I were not invincibly impelled towards it by the very nature of my subject, I should be urged to the investigation by my own heart. The miserable reluctance to grapple with the difficulty which either party evinces, is one of the overwhelming causes of our moral debasement,—a combat of condottieri, in which nobody fights; they advance, retire, menace, without touching one another,—contemptible sight! As long as fundamental questions remain thus eluded, there can be no progress, either religious or social. The world is waiting for a faith, to march forward again, to breathe and to live. But, never can faith have a beginning in deceit, cunning, or treaties of falsehood.

Single-handed and free from prejudices, I will attempt, in my weakness, what the strong do not venture to perform. I will fathom the question from which they recoil, and I shall attain, perhaps, before I die, the prize of life; namely, to discover the truth, and to tell it according to one's heart.

Engaged as I am in the task of describing the heroic days of Liberty, I may venture to entertain a hope that she herself may deign to support me,—accomplish her own work through the medium of this my book, and lay the deep foundation upon which a better age may build the faith of the future.

SECTION II.

IS THE REVOLUTION THE FULFILLING OF CHRISTIANITY?

SEVERAL eminent writers, with a laudable wish for peace and reconciliation, have lately affirmed that the Revolution was but the accomplishment of Christianity,—that it came to continue and to realize the latter, and to make good all it had promised.*

If this assertion be well founded, the eighteenth century, the philosophers, the precursors, the masters of the Revolution, have grievously erred, and have acted very differently from their real intentions. Generally, they aimed at anything rather than the accomplishment of Christianity.

If the Revolution consisted in that, and nothing more, it would then not be distinct from Christianity, but the actual time of its existence, its virile age—its age of reason. It would be nothing in itself. In this case, there would not be two actors, but one,—Christianity. If there be but one actor, then no drama, no crisis; the struggle we believe we see, is a mere illusion; the world seems to be agitated, but, in reality, is motionless.

But no, it is not so. The struggle is but too real. There is no sham fight here between one and the same person. There are two distinct combatants.

Neither must it be said that the new principle is but a criticism on the old one,—a doubt, a mere negation. Who ever saw a negation? What is a living, an acting negation, one that vivifies like this? A world sprang forth from it yesterday. No: in order to produce, there must be existence.

Therefore, there are two things here, and not one,—it is impossible to deny it. There are two principles, two spirits—the old and the new.

In vain the former, confident of life, and for this reason so much the more pacific, would whisper to the latter: "I come to fulfil, and not to abolish." The old principle has no manner of wish to be *fulfilled*. The very word sounds ominous and

* See, among other works, Quinet's "*Christianity and the French Revolution*." (London, Longman & Co., 1846.)—C. C.

sepulchral; it rejects that filial benediction, and desires neither tears nor prayers; it flings aside the branch that is shaken over it.

We must keep clear of misunderstandings, if we would know whither we are going.

The Revolution continues Christianity, and it contradicts it. It is, at the same time, its heir and its adversary.

In sentiment, and in all that is general and human between them, the two principles agree, but in all that constitutes very and special life,—in the operations of the mind, from which both derive their birth,—they are adverse and thwart each other.

They agree in the sentiment of human fraternity. This sentiment, born with man,—with the world, common to every society, has nevertheless been made more extensive and profound by Christianity. This is its glory, its eternal palm. It found fraternity confined to the banquets of ancient states; it extended its influence, and spread it throughout the vast Christian world. In her turn, the Revolution, the daughter of Christianity, has taught its lessons to the whole world, to every race, and to every religion under the sun.

This is the whole of the resemblance. Now for the difference.

The Revolution founds fraternity on the love of man for man, on mutual duty,—on Right and Justice. This base is fundamental, and no other is necessary.

It did not seek to add to this certain principle one derived from dubious history. It did not ground fraternity on a common relationship,—a filiation which transmits, with our blood, the participation of crime from father to son.

This carnal, material principle, which introduces justice and injustice into the blood, and transmits them, with the tide of life, from one generation to another, violently contradicts the spiritual notion of Justice which is implanted in the depths of the human soul. No; Justice is not a fluid, to be transmitted with generation. Will alone is just or unjust; the heart alone feels itself responsible. Justice is entirely in the soul; the body has nothing to do with it.

This barbarous material starting-point is astounding in a religion that has carried the subtlety of the dogma farther than any other. It impresses upon the whole system a profound

character of arbitrariness, from which no subtlety will be able to extricate it. Arbitrariness reaches, penetrates the developments of the dogma, all the religious institutions which are derived from it; and, lastly, the civil order, which, in the middle ages, is itself derived from those institutions, imitates its forms and is swayed by its spirit.

Let us consider this grand sight:

I. The starting-point is this: Crime comes from one, salvation from one; Adam has lost, Christ has saved.

He has saved! Why? Because he would save. No other motive. No virtue, no work of man, no human merit can deserve this prodigious sacrifice of God sacrificing himself. He gives himself, but for nothing: that is the miracle of love; he asks of man no work,—no anterior merit.

II. What does he require in return for this immense sacrifice? One single thing: people to believe in him, to believe themselves indeed saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. Faith is the condition of salvation, and not the works of Righteousness.

No Righteousness without faith. Whoever does not believe is *unrighteous*. Is righteousness without faith of any use? No.

Saint Paul, in laying down this principle of salvation by faith alone, has *nonsuited* Righteousness. Henceforth she is, at most, only an accessory, a sequel, one of the effects of faith.

III. Having once quitted Righteousness, we must ever go on descending into Necessity.

Believe, or perish! The question being thus laid down, people discover with terror that they will perish, that salvation is attached to a condition independent of the will. We do not believe as we will.

Saint Paul had laid down that man can do nought by good works, but only by faith. Saint Augustine demonstrates his insufficiency in faith itself. God alone gives it; he gives it even gratuitously, without requiring anything, neither faith nor justice. This *gratuitous* gift, this *grace*, is the only cause of salvation. God gives *grace* to whom he pleases. Saint Augustine has said: "I believe, because it is absurd." He might also say in this system: "I believe, because it is unjust."

Necessity goes no further. The system is consummated. God loves; no other explanation; he loves whom he pleases.

the least of all, the sinner, the least deserving. Love is its own reason ; it requires no merit.

What then would be *merit*, if we may still employ this word ? To be loved, the elect of God, predestined to salvation.

And *demerit*, damnation ! To be hated by God, condemned beforehand, created for damnation.

Alas ! we believed just now that humanity was saved. The sacrifice of a God seemed to have blotted out the sins of the world. No more judgment, no more justice. Blind that we were ! we were rejoicing, believing justice drowned in the blood of Jesus Christ. And lo ! judgment re-appears more harsh,—a judgment without justice, or at least the justice of which will be hidden from us for ever. The elect of God, the favourite, receives from him, with the gift of faith, the gift of doing good works,—the gift of salvation. That justice should be a gift ! For our part, we had thought it was active, the very act of the will. Yet here we have it passive, transmitted as a present, from God to the elect of his heart.

This doctrine, made into a formula more severely by the Protestants, is no less that of the Catholic world, such as it is acknowledged by the Council of Trent.

If *grace* (it says with the apostle) were not *gratuitous*, as its very name implies, if it ought to be merited by works of righteousness, it would be righteousness, and no longer grace. (*Conc. Trid.*, sess. vi. cap. viii.)

Such, says that council, has been the permanent belief of the church. And it could not be otherwise ; it is the groundwork of Christianity ; beyond that, there is philosophy, but no longer religion. The latter is the religion of grace,—of gratuitous, arbitrary salvation, and of the good pleasure of God.

Great was the embarrassment when Christianity, with this doctrine opposed to justice, was called to govern, to judge the world,—when Jurisprudence descended from her prætorium, and said to the new faith : “ Judge in my place.”

Then were people able to see at the bottom of this doctrine, which seemed to be sufficient for the world, an abyss of insufficiency, uncertainty, and discouragement.

If he remained faithful to the principle that salvation is a gift, and not the reward of Justice, man would have folded his arms, sat down, and waited ; for well he knew that his works

could have no influence on his lot. All moral activity ceased in this world. And how could civil life, order, human justice, be maintained? God loves, and no longer judges. How shall man judge? Every judgment, religious or political, is a flagrant contradiction in a religion founded solely on a dogma foreign to justice.

Without justice one cannot live. Therefore, the Christian world must put up with the contradiction. This introduces into many things something false and wrong; and this double position is only surmounted by means of hypocritical formulæ. The church judges, yet judges not; kills, yet kills not. She has a horror of shedding blood; therefore she burns—What do I say? She does not burn. She hands over the culprit to another to burn, and adds moreover a little prayer, as if to intercede—a terrible comedy, wherein Justice, false and cruel justice, assumes the mask of grace!

A strange punishment of the excessive ambition which desired more than justice, and yet despised it! This church has remained without justice. When, in the middle ages, she sees the latter reviving again, she wants to draw nearer to her. She tries to speak like her, to assume her language; she avows that man can do something towards his salvation by works of righteousness. Vain efforts! Christianity can be reconciled with Papinian only by withdrawing from Saint Paul—quitting its proper base, and leaning aside at the risk of losing its equilibrium and being dashed to atoms.

Having Necessity for a starting-point, this system must remain in Necessity; it cannot step beyond it.* All the

* At the present day, people despair of reconciling these different views. They no longer attempt to make peace between the dogma and justice. They manage matters better. Now they show it, now they conceal it. To simple confiding persons, to women, to children, whom they keep docile and obedient, they teach the old doctrine which places a terrible arbitrariness in God and in the man of God, and gives up the trembling creature defenceless to the priest. This terror is ever the faith and the law of the latter; the sword ever remains keen-edged for those poor hearts.

If, on the contrary, they speak to the strong, to thinkers and politicians, they suddenly become indulgent: "Is Christianity, after all, anywhere but in the Gospel? Are faith and philosophy so at variance? The old dispute between Grace and Justice (that is, the question to know whether Christianity be just) is quite obsolete."

This double policy has two effects, and both fatal. It weighs heavily upon

spurious attempts by which schoolmen, and others also since their time, have vainly attempted to institute a dogma founded upon reason, that is to say, a philosophical and jurist Christianity, must be discarded. They are devoid alike of virtue and strength. We can take no notice of them; they have passed into silence and oblivion. We must examine the system in itself, in its terrible purity, which constituted all its strength; we must follow it through its reign in the middle ages, and, above all things, mark its progress at the period when at length fixed, armed, and inflexible, it exercised a sway over the whole world.

A sombre doctrine this, which, at the destruction of the Roman empire, when civil order perished and human justice was, as it were, effaced, shut out all appeal to the supreme tribunal, and for a thousand years veiled the face of eternal justice.

The iniquity of conquest confirmed by decrees from God, becomes authorised and believes itself just. The conquerors are the elect, the conquered are the damned. Damnation without appeal. Ages may pass away and conquest be forgotten; but Heaven, devoid of justice, will not the less oppress the earth, though formed in its own image. Necessity, which constitutes the basis of this theology, will everywhere reappear with desperate fidelity in the political institutions, even in those wherein man had thought to build an asylum for justice. All monarchies, divine and human, govern for their elect.

Where then shall man take refuge? Grace reigns alone in heaven, and favour here below. That Justice, twice proscribed and banished, should venture to raise her head, requires indeed a difficult effort (so completely is the common sense of man extinguished beneath the weight of woes and the oppression of ages); it is necessary, in fact, that Justice should once more believe herself just, that she should arouse, remember herself,

woman, upon the child, upon the family, in which it creates discord, maintaining in opposition two contrary authorities,—two fathers.

It weighs heavily upon the world by a negative power, which does little, but which impedes, especially by the facility of presenting either of two aspects,—to some the elastic morality of the Gospel, to others immutable fatality, adorned with the name of grace. Hence, many a misunderstanding. Hence, many are tempted to connect modern faith,—that of Justice and the Revolution,—with the dogma of ancient injustice.

and resumed the consciousness of right. This consciousness, slowly endeavouring to awake throughout a period of six centuries of religious efforts, burst forth in the year '89 in the political and social world.

The Revolution is nothing but the tardy reaction of justice against the government of favour and the religion of grace.

SECTION III.

LEGENDS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

If you have sometimes travelled among mountains, you may perhaps have observed the same spectacle which I once met with.

From among a confused heap of rocks piled together, amid a landscape diversified with trees and verdure, towered a gigantic peak. That object, black, bare, and solitary, was but too evidently thrown up from the deep bowels of the earth. Enlivened by no verdure, no season changed its aspect; the very birds would hardly venture to alight on it, as if they feared to singe their wings on touching the mass which was projected from earth's central fire. That gloomy evidence of the throes of the interior world seemed still to muse over the scene, regardless of surrounding objects, without ever rousing from its savage melancholy.

What were then the subterraneous revolutions of the earth, what incalculable powers combated in its bosom, for that mass, disturbing mountains, piercing through rocks, shattering beds of marble, to burst forth to the surface! What convulsions, what agony forced from the entrails of the globe that prodigious groan!

I sat down, and from my eyes tears of anguish, slow and painful, began to flow. Nature had but too well reminded me of history. That chaos of mountain heaps oppressed me with the same weight which had crushed the heart of man throughout the middle ages; and in that desolate peak, which from her inmost bowels the earth had hurled towards heaven, I saw pictured the despair and the cry of the human race.

That Justice should have borne for a thousand years that mountain of dogma upon her heart, and, crushed beneath its weight, have counted the hours, the days; the years, so

many long years—is, for him who knows it, a source of eternal tears. He who through the medium of history has participated in that long torture, will never entirely recover from it ; whatever may happen he will be sad ; the sun, the joy of the world, will never more afford him comfort ; he has lived too long in sorrow and in darkness ; and my very heart bled in contemplating the long resignation, the meekness, the patience, and the efforts of humanity to love that world of hate and malediction under which it was crushed.


When man, resigning liberty and justice as something useless, entrusted himself blindly to the hands of Grace, and saw it becoming concentrated on an imperceptible point,—that is to say the privileged, the elect,—and saw all other beings, whether on earth or under the earth, lost for eternity, you would suppose there arose everywhere a howl of blasphemy!—No, only a groan.

And these affecting words : “ If thou wilt that I be damned, thy will be done, O Lord ! ”

Then peaceful, submissive, and resigned, they folded themselves in the shroud of damnation !

This is, indeed, serious, worthy of remembrance ; a thing which theology had never foreseen. It had taught that the damned could do nothing but hate. But these still loved. These damned souls trained themselves to love theelect, their masters. The priest, the lord, those chosen children of heaven, found, for ages, only meekness, docility, love, and confidence in that humble people. They served, they suffered, in silence ; trod upon, they returned thanks ; they did not sin even with their lips, as did the saintly Job.

What preserved them from death ? One thing, we must say, which reanimated, refreshed the sufferer in his long torment. That astonishing meekness of soul which he preserved, gave him bliss ; from that heart, so wounded, yet so good, sprung a living source of lovely and tender fancy, a flood of popular religion to counteract the dryness of the other. Watered by those fruitful streams, the legend flourished and grew ; it shaded the unfortunate with its compassionate flowers—flowers of the native soil, blossoms of the fatherland, which somewhat refreshed and occasionally buried in oblivion Byzantine metaphysics and the theology of death.



Yet death was beneath those flowers. The patron, the good saint of the place, was not potent enough to defend his *protégé* against a dogma of dread. The Devil hardly waited till man expired in order to seize him. He beset him living. He was the lord of this world ; man was his property, his fief. It appeared so but too plainly in the social order of the time.

What a constant temptation to despair and doubt ! How bondage here below was, with all its miseries, the beginning,—the foretaste of eternal damnation ! First, a life of suffering ; next, for consolation, hell !—Damned beforehand !—Then, wherefore those comedies of Judgment represented in the church-porches ! Is it not barbarous to keep in uncertainty, in dreadful anxiety, ever suspended over the abyss, him who, before his birth, is adjudged to the bottomless pit, is due to it, and belongs to it ?

Before his birth !—The infant, the innocent, created expressly for hell ! Nay, did I say the innocent ? This is the horror of the system ; innocence is no more. I know not, but I boldly and unhesitatingly affirm this to be the insoluble knot at which the human soul stopped short, and patience was staggered.

The infant damned ! I have elsewhere pointed out that deep, frightful wound of the maternal heart. I pointed it out, and again drew the veil over it. In exploring its depths we should find there much more than the terrors of death.

Thence it was, believe me, that the first sigh arose. Of protestation ? No ! And yet, unknown to the heart whence it escaped, there was a terrible remonstrance in that humble, low, agonising groan.

So low, but so heart-rending ! The man who heard it at night, slept no more—not for many a night after : and in the morning, before day-light, he went to his furrow ; and there found many things were changed. He found the valley and the field of labour lower—much lower,—deep, like a sepulchre ; and the two towers in the horizon more lofty—more gloomy and heavy ; gloomy the church-steeple, and dismal the feudal castle. Then he began to comprehend the sounds of the two bells. The church-bell murmured, *Ever* ; that of the donjon, *Never*. But, at the same time, a mighty voice spoke louder in his heart. That voice cried, *One day !* And that was the voice of God ! *One day* justice shall return ! Leave

those idle bells ; let them prate to the wind. Be not alarmed with thy doubt. That doubt is already faith. Believe, hope ! Right, though postponed, shall have its advent ; it will come to sit in judgment, on the dogma and on the world. And *that day* of Judgment will be called the Revolution.

SECTION IV.

THE CLERGY AND THE PEOPLE.

I HAVE often asked myself, whilst pursuing the dismal study of the middle ages, through paths full of thorns "*tristis usque ad mortem*," how a religion, which is the mildest in its principle, and has its starting-point in love itself, could ever have covered the world with that vast sea of blood ?

Pagan antiquity, entirely warlike, murderous, and destructive, had been lavish of human life, unconscious of its value. Youthful and merciless, beautiful and cold, like the virgin of Tauris, she killed and remained unmoved. You do not find in her grand immolations so much passion, inveteracy, or fury of hate, as characterise, in the middle ages, the combats and the vengeance of the religion of love.

The first reason which I have assigned for this, in my book *Du Prêtre*, is the prodigious intoxication of pride which this belief gives to its elect. What maddening dizziness ! Every day, to make God descend upon the altar, to be obeyed by God !—Shall I say it ? (I hesitated for fear of blaspheming) *to make God !* How shall he be called who does this miracle of miracles every day ? A God ? That would not be enough.

The more strange, unnatural, and monstrous this greatness, the more uneasy and full of misgiving is he who pretends to it : he seems to me as though he were sitting on the steeple of Strasburg, upon the point of the cross. Imagine his hatred and violence towards any man who dares to touch him, shake him, or try and make him descend !—Descend ? There is no descending. He must fall from such a place,—he must fall ; but so heavy is the fall, that it would bury him into the earth.

Be well convinced that if, in order to maintain himself, he

can suppress the world with a nod ; if what God created with one word, he can exterminate with one word, the world is annihilated.

This state of uneasiness, anger, and trembling hate explains alone the incredible fury of the church in the middle ages, in proportion as she beheld her rival, Justice, arise against her.

The latter was scarcely perceptible at first. Nothing was so low, so minute, so humble. A paltry blade of grass, forgotten in the furrow ; even stooping, you would hardly have perceived it.

Justice, thou who wast lately so feeble, how canst thou grow so fast ! If I but turn aside a moment, I know thee no longer. I find thee every hour grown ten cubits higher. Theology quakes, reddens with anger, and turns pale.

Then begins a terrible, frightful struggle, beyond the power of language to express. Theology flinging aside the demure mask of grace, abdicating, denying herself, in order to annihilate Justice, striving to absorb—to destroy her within herself, to swallow her up. Behold them standing face to face ; which of them, at the end of this mortal combat, is found to have absorbed, incorporated, assimilated the other ?

Let the revolutionary reign of Terror beware of comparing herself with the Inquisition. Let her never boast of having, in her two or three years, paid back to the old system what it did to us for six hundred years ! The Inquisition would have good cause to laugh ! What are the twelve thousand men guillotined of the one, to the millions of men butchered, hung, broken on the wheel,—to that pyramid of burning stakes,—to those masses of burnt flesh, which the other piled up to heaven. The single Inquisition of one of the provinces of Spain states, in an authentic monument, that in sixteen years it burned twenty thousand men ! But why speak of Spain, rather than of the Albigenses, of the Vaudois of the Alps, of the Beggars of Flanders, of the Protestants of France, or of the horrible crusade against the Hussites, and so many nations whom the pope abandoned to the sword ?

History will inform us that in her most ferocious and implacable moments the Revolution trembled at the thought of aggravating death, that she shortened the sufferings of victims, removed the hand of man, and invented a machine to abridge the pangs of death.

And it will also inform us that the church of the middle ages exhausted herself in inventions to augment suffering, to render it poignant, intense ; that she found out exquisite arts of torture, ingenious means to contrive that, without dying, one might long taste of death—and that, being stopped in that path by inflexible nature, who, at a certain degree of pain, mercifully grants death, she wept at not being able to make man suffer longer.

I cannot, I will not agitate that sea of blood. If God allow me one day to touch it, that blood shall boil again with life, flow in torrents to drown false history and the hired flatterers of murder, to fill their lying mouths.

Well do I know that the greater part of those grand butcheries can no longer be related. They have burnt the books, burnt the men, burnt the calcined bones over again, and flung away the ashes. When, for instance, shall I recover the history of the Vaudois, or of the Albigenses ? The day when I shall have the history of the star that I saw falling to-night. A world, a whole world has sunk, perished, both men and things. A poem has been recovered, and bones have been found at the bottom of caverns ; but no names, no signs. Is it with these sad remnants that I can form that history again ? Let our enemies triumph that they have rendered us powerless, and at having been so barbarous that one cannot, with certainty, recount their barbarities ! At least the desert speaks,—the desert of Languedoc, the solitudes of the Alps, the unpeopled mountains of Bohemia, and so many other places, where man has disappeared, where the earth has become sterile for ever, and where Nature, after man, seems itself exterminated.

But one thing cries louder than all their destructions (and this one thing is authentic), which is, that the system which killed in the name of a principle, in the name of a faith, made use indifferently of two opposite principles,—the tyranny of kings, and the blind anarchy of nations. In one single century, the sixteenth, Rome changed three times, throwing herself now to the right, now to the left, without either prudence or decency. First, she gives herself up to the kings ; next, she throws herself into the arms of the people ; then again, she returns to the kings. Three lines of policy, but one aim. How attained ? No matter. What aim ? To destroy the power of thought.

A writer has discovered that the pope's nuncio had no foreknowledge of the Saint Bartholomew (massacre). And I have discovered that the pope had prepared it,—worked at it, for ten years.

"A trifle," says another, "a mere local affair, a vengeance of Paris."

In spite of the utter disgust, the contempt, the sickness, which these theories occasion me, I have confronted them with the records of history, with unexceptionable documents. And I have found far and near, the blood-red traces of the massacre. I can prove that, from the day when Paris proposed (1561) the general sale of the goods of the clergy, from the day when the church beheld the king wavering, and tempted by the hopes of that booty, she turned hastily, violently towards the people, and employed every means in her power, by preaching, by alms, by different influences, and by her immense connection, her converts, trades-people, and mendicants, to organize the massacre.

"A popular affair," say you. True. But tell us also by what diabolical scheme, by what infernal perseverance, you worked during the space of ten years to pervert the understanding of the people, to excite and drive them mad.

O spirit of cunning and murder! I have lived too many centuries in face of thee, throughout the middle ages, for thee ever to deceive me. After having so long denied justice and liberty, thou didst assume their name for thy shout of war. In their name thou didst work a rich mine of hate,—that eternal repining which inequality implants in the heart of man, the envy of the poor for the rich. Thou tyrant, thou proprietor, and the most ravenous in the world, didst unhesitatingly embrace on a sudden, and exceed, with one bound, the most impracticable theories of the Levellers.

Before the Saint Bartholomew massacre, the clergy used to say to the people, in order to excite them, "*The Protestants are nobles, provincial gentlemen.*" That was true; the clergy having already exterminated, stifled Protestantism in the towns. The castles alone being shut, were still able to remain Protestant. But read of their earlier martyrs; they were the inhabitants of towns, petty tradesmen, and workmen. Those creeds which were pointed out to the hatred of people as those of the

aristocracy, had sprung from the very people. Who does not know that Calvin was the son of a cooper?

It would be too easy for me to show how all this has been misrepresented in our time by writers subservient to the clergy, and then copied without consideration. I wanted only to show, by one example, the ferocious address with which the clergy urged the people, and made for themselves a deadly weapon of social jealousy. The detail would be curious; I regret to postpone it. I could tell you the plans resorted to, in order to work the ruin of an individual—or a set of men; calumny, skilfully directed by a special press, slowly manipulated in the schools and seminaries, especially in the parlours of convents, directly intrusted (in order to be more quickly diffused) to penitents, to the suborned trades-people of the curates and canons, was put in motion among the people. How it worked itself into fury in those establishments of gluttony, termed Brotherhoods, to which, among other things, they abandoned the immense wealth of the hospitals. Low, paltry, miserable details, but without which the wholesale murders perpetrated by a Catholic rabble would remain incomprehensible.

Occasionally, if it was sought to destroy a man of repute, superior art was added to these manoeuvres. By means of money or intimidation, some talented writer was found and let loose upon him. Thus, the king's confessor, to succeed in getting Vallée burnt, made Ronsard write against him. And so to ruin Théophile, the confessor instigated Balzac, who could not forgive Théophile for having drawn his sword for him, and saved him from personal chastisement.

In our own times, I have had an opportunity of noticing how the same set, in the name of the Church, arouse and foster hatred and disturbance in the breasts of the obscure and lower orders,—the very dregs of society. I once saw, in a city of the west, a young professor of philosophy, whom the ecclesiastics wanted to expel from his chair, followed, and pointed at in the street by a mob of women. What did they know about philosophical questions? Nothing, save what they were taught in the confessional. They were not less furious on that account, standing before their doors, pointing, and shouting: "There he is!"

In a large city in the eastern department, I was witness

to another, and, perhaps, still more odious spectacle. An old Protestant pastor, almost blind, who, every day, and often several times in the day, was followed and insulted by the children of a school, who pulled him behind, and strove to throw him down.

That is their usual way of beginning their game; by innocent agents, against whom you cannot defend yourself,—little children, women. On more favourable occasions, in unenlightened provinces, easy to be excited, men take a share in the game. The master, who holds to the church, as a member of some *confrérie*, as a tradesman or a lodger, grumbles, shouts, cabals, and collects a mob. The journeyman and the valet get drunk to do mischief; the apprentice follows—surpasses them—strikes, without knowing why,—the very children sometimes assassinate.

Next come false reasoners, foolish theorists, to baptize this pious assassination with the name of *justice of the people*, to canonize the crime perpetrated by tyrants in the name of liberty.

Thus it was, that, in the selfsame day, they found means to slaughter, with one blow, all that formed the honour of France, the first philosopher of the age, the first sculptor, and the first musician,—Ramus, Jean Goujon, and Goudimel. How much rather would they have butchered our great jurisconsult, the enemy of Rome and the Jesuits, the genius of right,—Dumoulin!

Happily, he was safe. He had spared them a crime; his noble life had taken refuge in God. But, before that time, he had seen riots organised four times by the clergy against him and his home. That holy temple of study four times violated and pillaged, his books profaned and dispersed, his manuscripts, irreparable patrimony of mankind, flung into the gutter and destroyed. They have not destroyed Justice; the living spirit contained in those books was emancipated by the flames; it expanded and pervaded everything, impregnating the very atmosphere, so that, thanks to the murderous fury of fanaticism, they could breathe no air but that of equity.

SECTION V.

HOW FREE-THINKERS ESCAPED.

AFTER a grand festival, a great carnage in the Coliseum of Rome, when the sand had been moistened with blood, and the lions were lying down, cloyed, surfeited with human flesh, then, in order to divert the people, to distract their attention a little, a farce was enacted. An egg was put into the hand of a miserable slave condemned to the wild beasts; and then he was cast into the arena. If he managed to reach the end, if, by good fortune, he succeeded in carrying his egg and laying it upon the altar, he was saved. The distance was not great, but how far it seemed to him! Those brutes, glutted, asleep, or just going to sleep, would, nevertheless, at the sound of the light footstep, raise their heavy eyelids, and yawn fearfully, in doubt apparently whether they ought to interrupt their repose for such ridiculous prey. He, half dead with fear, stooping, shrinking, cringing, as if to sink into the earth, would have exclaimed, doubtless, could he have given utterance to his thought: "Alas! alas! noble lions, I am so meagre! Pray allow this living skeleton to pass; it is a meal unworthy of you." Never did any buffoon, any mimic, produce such an effect upon the people; the extraordinary comical contortions and agonies of fear convulsed all the spectators with laughter; they rolled on their benches in the excess of their mirth; it was a fearful tempest of merriment—a roar of joy.

I am obliged to say, in spite of every consideration, that this spectacle was revived towards the close of the middle ages, when the old principle, furious at the thought of dying, imagined it would still have time to annihilate human thought. Once more, as in the Coliseum, miserable slaves were seen carrying among wild beasts, uncloyed, unglutted, furious, atrocious and ravenous, the poor little deposit of proscribed truth,—the fragile egg which might save the world, if it reached the altar.

Others will laugh—and woe to them! But I can never laugh on beholding that spectacle—that farce, those contortions, those efforts to deceive, to dupe, the growling monsters, to

amuse that unworthy multitude, wound me to the heart. Those slaves whom I see passing yonder across the bloody arena, are the sovereigns of the mind, the benefactors of the human race. O my fathers, O my brethren, Voltaire, Molière, Rabelais, beloved of my thoughts, it is you whom I behold trembling, suffering and ridiculous, under that sad disguise! Sublime geniuses, privileged to bear the sacred gift of God, have you then accepted, on our account, that degraded martyrdom to be the buffoons of fear?

Degraded!—Oh! no, never! From the centre of the amphitheatre they addressed me in a kind voice: "Friend, what matters if they laugh at us? What do we care at being devoured by wild beasts, at suffering the outrage of cruel men, if we but reach the goal, provided this dear treasure, laid safely upon the altar, be recovered by mankind, whom it will save sooner or later. Do you know what this treasure is?—Liberty, Justice, Truth, Reason."

When we reflect by what imperceptible degrees, through what difficulties and obstacles, every grand design is accomplished, we are less surprised on beholding the humiliation, the degradation, to which its originator is often subjected. Who would undertake the task of following, from unknown depths to the surface, the progress of a thought? Who can tell the confused forms, the modifications, the fatal delays it has to undergo for ages? With what slow steps does it emerge from instinct to musing, to reverie, and thence to the poetical chiaroscuro! How long is its progress confined to children and fools, to poets and madmen? And yet one day that madness proves to be the common sense of all! But this is not enough. All men think, but nobody dares speak.—Why? Is courage wanting?—Yes; and why is it wanting?—Because the discovered truth is not yet clear enough; it must first shine out in all its splendour for people to become its martyrs. At length it bursts forth luminous in some genius, and it renders him heroic; it inflames him with devotion, love, and sacrifice. He lays it to his heart and goes among the lions.

Hence that strange spectacle which I beheld just now, that sublime yet terrible farce. Look, see how he quakes as he passes, humble and trembling; how he clasps, conceals, presses something to his heart. Oh! he trembles not for himself.—

Glorious trepidation! heroic fear! See you not that he is carrying the salvation of mankind?

Only one thing gives me uneasiness.—Where is the place of refuge in which that deposit is to be concealed? What altar is sacred enough to guard that holy treasure? And what god is sufficiently divine to protect what is no less than the conception of God himself? Great men, ye who are carrying that deposit of salvation with the tender care of a mother nursing her child, take heed, I beseech you; be wary in choosing the asylum to which you intrust it. Beware of human idols, shun the gods of flesh or of wood, who, far from protecting others, cannot protect themselves.

I behold you all, towards the close of the middle ages, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, emulously building up and aggrandizing that sanctuary of refuge, the Altar of Royalty. In order to dethrone idols, you erect an idol—and you offer to her everything,—gold, incense, and myrrh. To her, heavenly wisdom; to her, tolerance, liberty, philosophy; to her, the ultima ratio of society.—Right.

How should this divinity not become colossal? The most powerful minds in the world, pursued and hunted to death by the old implacable principle, work hard to build up their asylum ever higher and higher; they would like to raise it to heaven. Hence, a series of legends, fables, adorned and amplified by every effort of genius: in the thirteenth century, it is the *saint-king*, more priest than the priest himself; the *chevalier-king* in the sixteenth; the *god-king* in Henri IV., and the God-king in Louis XIV.

SECOND PART.

ON THE ANCIENT MONARCHY.

SECTION I.

As early as the year 1300, I behold the great Ghibelin poet, who, in opposition to the pope, strengthens and exalts to heaven the Colossus of Cæsar. *Unity* is salvation; *one* monarch, one for the whole earth. Then, blindly following up his austere, inflexible logic, he lays it down, that the greater this monarch, the more he becomes omnipotent,—the more he becomes a God, and the less mankind should apprehend that he will ever abuse his power. If he has all, he desires nought; still less can he envy or hate. He is perfect, and perfectly, sovereignty just; he governs infallibly, like the justice of God.

Such is the ground-work of all the theories which have since been heaped up in support of this principle: *Unity*, and the supposed result of unity, *peace*. And since then we have hardly ever had anything but wars.

We must dig lower than Dante, and discover and look into the earth for the deep popular foundation whereon the Colossus was built.

Man needs justice. A captive within the straight limits of a dogma reposing entirely on the arbitrary grace of God, he thought to save justice in a political religion, and made unto himself, of a man, a *God of Justice*; hoping that this visible God would preserve for him the light of equity which had been darkened in the other.

I hear this exclamation escape from the bosom of ancient France,—a tender expression of intense love: "O my king!"

This is no flattery. Louis XIV., when young, was truly loved by two persons,—by the people and La Vallière.

At that time, it was the faith of all. Even the priest seems to remove his God from the altar, to make room for the new God. The Jesuits banish Jesus from the door of their establishment to substitute Louis-le-Grand; I read on the vaults of the chapel at Versailles: "Intrabit templum suum dominator." The words had not two meanings: the court knew but one God.

The Bishop of Meaux, is afraid lest Louis XIV. should not have enough faith in himself; he encourages him: "O kings, exercise your power boldly, for it is divine—Ye are gods!"

An astounding dogma, and yet the people were most willing to believe it. They suffered so many local tyrannies, that, from the most remote quarters, they invoked the distant God, the God of the monarchy. No evil is imputed to him: if his people suffer any, it is because he is too high or too distant.—"If the king did but know!"

We have here a singular feature of France; this nation for a long time comprehended politics only as devotion and love. A vigorous, obstinate, blind love, which attributes as a merit to their God all his imperfections; whatever human weakness they perceive in him is a cause of thanksgiving rather than of disgust. They believe he will be but so much the nearer to them, less haughty, less hardhearted, and more compassionate on that account. They feel obliged to Henri IV. for his love of Gabrielle.

This love for royalty during the earlier days of Louis XIV. and Colbert, was idolatry; the king's endeavours to do equal justice to all, to lessen the odious inequality of taxation, gained him the heart of the people. Colbert reduced forty thousand pretended nobles, and subjected them to taxation; he forced the leading burgesses to give an account at length of the finances of the towns, which they used to turn to their own advantage. The nobles of the provinces who, under favour of the confusion, made themselves feudal barons, received the formidable visits of the envoys of the parliament; royal justice was blessed for its severity. The king appeared as terrible, in his *Grands jours*,* as the Day of Judgment, between the people and the nobility, the people being on his

* High days, on which was held a high Court of Justice.—C. C.

right, and huddling together by the side of their judge, full of love and confidence.

"Tremble, tyrants ! Do you not see that we have God on our side ?" This is exactly the language of a poor simple people, who believe they have the king in their favour. They imagine they already behold in him the Angel of the Revolution, and, with outstretched arms, they invoke him, full of tenderness and hope. Nothing is more affecting to read, among other facts of this kind, than the account of the *Grands jours d' Auvergne*, the ingenuous hope of the people, the quaking of the nobility. A peasant, whilst speaking to a lord, had not uncovered ; the noble knocked his hat off : "If you do not pick it up," said the peasant, "the High Days are approaching, and the king will cut your head off." The noble was afraid, and picked it up.*

Grand, sublime position of royalty ! Would that she had never forsaken it ; would that the judge of all had not become the judge of *a few*, and that this God of Justice had not, like the God of the theologians, wished also to have his *elect* !

Such confidence, and such love ! and yet, all betrayed ! That well-beloved king was hardhearted towards his people. Search everywhere, in books and pictures, contemplate him in his portraits : not a motion, not one look, reveals the least emotion of the heart. The love of a whole people—that grand

* The *gens du roi*, or, *parlementaires*, who inspired the people with so much confidence (and who, it is true, have done important services) did not, however, represent Justice more seriously than the priests represented Grace. This regal justice was, after all, subject to the king's good pleasure. A great master of Machiavelism, Cardinal Dubois, explains, with much good sense and precision, in a memorial to the regent against the States-General (vol. i. of the *Moniteur*), the very simple mechanism of this parliamentary game, the steps of this minuet, the figures of this dance, up to the *lit de Justice* which ends the whole affair, by putting Justice under the feet of the king's good pleasure. As to the States-General, which were a subject of dread to Dubois, Saint Simon, his adversary, recommends them as an expedient at once innocent, agreeable and easy, for dispensing one from paying one's debts, for rendering bankruptcy honourable, *canonizing it*, to use his own expression ; moreover, those States are never seriously effective, says he very properly: *verba, voces*, nothing more. I say that there was, both in the States and in the parliaments, one thing most serious ; which is, that those vain images of liberty occupied, employed, the little vigour and spirit of resistance that subsisted. The reason why France could not have a constitution, is, that she believed she had one.

rarity, that true miracle—has succeeded only in making of their idol a miracle of egotism.

He took Adoration at its word, and believed himself a God. But he comprehended nothing in that word *God*. To be a God is to live for all ; but he becomes more and more the king of the court ; the few he sees, that band of gilded beggars who beset him, are his people. A strange Divinity, he contracted and stifled a world in one man, instead of extending and aggrandizing that man to the measure of a world. His whole world now is Versailles ; and even there, look narrowly ; if you find some petty, obscure, dismal closet, a living tomb, that is all he wants ; enough for one individual.*

SECTION II.

FAMINE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

I WILL presently investigate the idea on which France subsisted—the government of grace and paternal monarchy ; that inquiry will be much promoted perhaps, if I first establish, by authentic proofs, the results in which this system had at length terminated. A tree is known by its fruits.

First, nobody will deny that it secured for this people the glory of a prodigious and incredible patience. Read the foreign travellers of the last two centuries ; you behold them stupified, when travelling through our plains, at their wretched appearance, at the sadness, the solitude, the miserable poverty, the dismal, naked, empty cottages, and the starving, ragged population. There they learn what man is able to endure without dying ; what nobody, neither the English, the Dutch, nor the Germans, would have supported.

What astonishes them still more, is the resignation of this people, their respect for their masters, lay or ecclesiastical, and their idolatrous attachment for their kings. That they should preserve, amid such sufferings, so much patience and meekness, such goodness and docility, so little rancour for

* I allude to the little dark apartment of Madame de Maintenon, where Louis XIV. expired. For his personal belief of his own divinity, see especially his surprising Memoirs written before his face and revised by himself.

oppression, is indeed a strange mystery. It perhaps explains itself partly by the kind of careless philosophy, the too indifferent facility with which the Frenchman welcomes bad weather; it will be fine again sooner or later; rain to-day, sunshine to-morrow. He does not grumble at a rainy day.

French sobriety also, that eminently military quality, aided their resignation. Our soldiers, in this matter, as in every other, have shown the limits of human endurance. Their fasting, in painful marches and excessive toils, would have frightened the lazy hermits of the Thebais, such as Anthony and Pachomus.

We must learn from Marshal Villars how the armies of Louis XIV. used to live: "Several times we thought that bread would absolutely fail us; then, by great efforts, we got together enough for half a day: the next day is got over by fasting. When M. d'Artagnan marched, the brigades not marching were obliged to fast. Our sustenance is a miracle, and the virtue and firmness of our soldiers are marvellous. *Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie*, say they to me as I pass through the ranks, after they have but the quarter and the half ration. I encourage them and give them promises; they merely shrug up their shoulders, and gaze at me with a look of resignation that affects me. 'The Marshal is right,' say they; 'we must learn to suffer sometimes.'"

Patience! Virtue! Resignation! Can any one help being affected, on meeting with such traces of the goodness of our fathers?

Who will enable me to go through the history of their long sufferings, their gentleness and moderation? It was long the astonishment, sometimes the laughing-stock of Europe! Great merriment was it for the English to see those soldiers half-starved and almost naked, yet cheerful, amiable, and good towards their officers; performing, without a murmur, immense marches, and, if they found nothing in the evening, making their supper of songs.

If patience merits heaven, this people, in the two last centuries, truly surpassed all the merits of the saints; but how shall we make the legend? Their vestiges are widely diffused. Misery is a general fact; the virtue to support it a virtue so common among us, that historians seldom deign to

notice it. Moreover, history is defective in the eighteenth century ; France, after the cruel fatigues of the wars of Louis XIV., suffers too much to relate her own story. No more memoirs ; nobody has the courage to write his individual life ; even vanity is mute, having but shame to tell. Till the philosophical movement, this country is silent,—like the deserted palace of Louis XIV.—surviving his own family, like the chamber of the dying man who still governs, the old Cardinal Fleury.

It is difficult to describe properly the history of those times, as they are unmarked by rebellions. No people ever had fewer. This nation loved her masters ; she had no rebellion,—nothing but a Revolution.

It is from their very masters, their kings, princes, ministers, prelates, magistrates, and intendants, that we may learn to what extremities the people were reduced. It is they who are about to describe the restraints in which the people were held.

The mournful procession in which they all advance one after the other in order to recount the death of France, is led by Colbert in 1681 : “ One can go on no longer,” says he, and he dies.—They do go on however, for they expel half a million of industrious men about 1685, and kill still more, in a thirty years’ war. But, good God ! how many more die of misery !

As early as 1698, the result is visible. The intendants themselves, who create the evil, reveal and deplore it. In the memorials which they are asked to give for the young duke of Burgundy, they declare that such a province has lost the quarter of its inhabitants, another a third, and another the half. And the population is not renewed ; the peasant is so miserable that his children are all weak, sickly, and unable to live.

Let us follow attentively the series of years. That deplorable period of 1698 becomes an object of regret. “ Then,” says Boisguillebert, a magistrate, “ there was still oil in the lamp. To-day (1707) it goes out for want of nourishment.”—A mournful expression ; and he adds a threatening sentence ; one would think it was the year ’89 : “ The trial will now be between those who pay, and those whose only function is to receive.”

The preceptor to the grandson of Louis XIV., the Archbishop

of Cambrai, is not less *revolutionnaire* than this petty Norman magistrate : " The people no longer live like men ; it is no longer safe to rely upon their patience. The old machine will break up at the first shock. We dare not look upon the state of exhaustion which we have now attained ; all we can do is to shut our eyes, open our hands, and go on taking."

Louis XIV. dies at last, and the people thank God. Happily we have the regent, that good duke of Orleans, who, if Fenelon still lived, would take him for his counsellor ; he prints *Telemachus* ; France shall be a Salentum. No more wars. We are now the friends of England ; we give up to her our commerce, our honour, nay even our State secrets. Who would believe that, in the bosom of peace, this amiable prince, in only seven years, finds means to add to the two billions and a half of debts left by Louis XIV., *seven hundred and fifty millions* (of francs) more ?—The whole paid up in paper.

" If I were a subject," he used to say, " I would most certainly revolt ! " And when he was told that a disturbance was about to take place, " The people are right," said he ; " they are good-natured fools to suffer so long ! "

Fleury is as economical as the regent was lavish. Does France improve ? I doubt it, when I see that the bread presented to Louis XV. as the bread that the people ate, is bread made of fern.

The Bishop of Chartres told him, that, in his diocese, the men browsed with the sheep. What is perhaps still stronger, is, that M. d'Argenson (a minister) speaking of the sufferings of those times, contrasts them with *the good time*. Guess which. That of the regent and the duke,—the time when France, exhausted by Louis XIV., and bleeding at every pore, sought a remedy in a bankruptcy of three billions !

Everybody sees the crisis approaching. Fenelon says, so early as 1709 : " The old machine will break up at the first shock." It does not break up yet. Then Madame de Chateauroux, about 1742 : " I see plainly that there will be a general overthrow, if no remedy be used."—Yes, Madam, everybody sees it,—the king and your successor, Madame de Pompadour, as well as the economists, the philosophers, foreigners, everybody. All admire the longanimity of this people ; it is Job sitting among the nations. O meekness !

O patience!—Walpole laughs at it, but I mourn over it. That unfortunate people still loves; still believes; is obstinate in hoping. It is ever waiting for its saviour. Which? Its God-man, its king.

Ridiculous yet affecting idolatry—What will this God, this king, do? He possesses neither the firm will, nor the power, perhaps, to cure the deeply-rooted, inveterate, universal evil now consuming, parching, famishing the community, draining its life's blood from its veins,—from its very heart.

The evil consists in this, that the nation, from the highest to the lowest, is organised so as to go on producing less and less, and paying more and more. She will go on declining, wasting away, giving, after her blood, her marrow; and there will be no end to it, till having reached the last gasp, and just expiring, the convulsion of the death-struggle arouses her once more, and raises that pale feeble body on its legs—Feeble?—grown strong perhaps by fury!

Let us minutely examine, if you will, these words *producing less and less*. They are exact to the letter.

As early as under Louis XIV. the excise (*aides*) already weighed so heavily, that at Mantes, Etampes, and elsewhere, all the vines were plucked up.

The peasant having no goods to seize, the exchequer can lay hold of nothing but the cattle; it is gradually exterminated. No more manure. The cultivation of corn, though extended in the seventeenth century, by immense clearings of waste land, decreases in the eighteenth. The earth can no longer repair her generative strength; she fasts, and becomes exhausted; as the cattle may become extinct, so also the land now appears dead.

Not only does the land produce less, but it is less cultivated. In many places, it is not worth while to cultivate it. Large proprietors, tired of advancing to their peasants sums that never return, neglect the land which would require expensive improvements. The portion cultivated grows less, and the desert expands. People talk of agriculture, write books on it, make expensive experiments, paradoxical schemes of cultivation;—and agriculture, devoid of succour, of vattle, grows wild. Men, women, and children, yoke themselves to the plough. They would dig the ground with their nails, if our ancient laws

did not, at least, defend the ploughshare,—the last poor implement that furrows the earth. How can we be surprised that the crops should fail with such half-starved husbandmen, or that the land should suffer and refuse to yield? The yearly produce no longer suffices for the year. As we approach 1789, Nature yields less and less. Like a beast over fatigued, unwilling to move one step further, and preferring to lie down and die, she waits, and produces no more. Liberty is not only the life of man, but also that of nature.

SECTION III.

DOES ANCIENT PATRONAGE SUBSIST IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY?

NEVER accuse Nature of being a bad mother. Believe not that God has withdrawn the beneficent light of his countenance from the earth. The earth is always a good and bountiful mother, ever ready and willing to help mankind; though superficially she may appear sterile and ungrateful, yet she loves him tenderly in her innermost depths.

It is man who has ceased to love,—man who is the enemy of mankind. The malediction which weighs him down is his own, the curse of egotism and injustice, the load of an unjust society. Whom must he blame? Neither nature, nor God, but himself, his work, his idols, his gods, whom he has created.

He has transferred his idolatry from one to another. To his wooden gods he has said, “Protect me, be my saviours!” He has said so to the priest, he has said so to the noble, he has said so to the king.—Alas! poor man, be thy own saviour,—save thyself.

He loved them,—that is his excuse; it explains his blindness. How he loved, how he believed! What artless faith in the *good Lord*, in the *dear, holy man of God*! How he would fall on his knees before them on the public road, and kiss the dust long after they had passed! How obstinately he put his trust and his hopes in them, even when spurned and trampled on! Remaining ever a miser,—an infant, he felt a sort of filial delight in concealing nothing from them, in intrusting to their hands the whole care of his future. “I have

nothing :—I am poor ; but I am the baron's man, and belong to that fine *château* yonder !" Or else, "I have the honour to be the serf of that famous monastery. I can never want for anything."

Go now, go, good man, in the day of thy need ; go and knock at their gate.

At the *château* ? But the gate is shut ; the large table, where so many once sat down, has long been empty ; the hearth is cold ; there is no fire, no smoke. The lord is at Versailles. He does not, however, forget thee. He has left his attorney behind, and his bailiff, to take care of thee.

"Well ! I will go to the monastery. Is not that house of charity the poor man's home ? The Church says to me every day : 'God so loved the world !—He was made man, and became food to nourish man !' Either the Church is nothing, or it must be charity divine realised upon earth."

Knock, knock, poor Lazarus ! Thou wilt wait long enough. Dost thou not know that the Church has now withdrawn from the world, and that all these affairs of poor people and charity no longer concern her ? There were two things in the middle ages,—wealth and functions, of which she was very jealous ; more equitable, however, in modern times, she has made two divisions of them ; the functions, such as schools, hospitals, alms, and the patronage of the poor,—all these things which mixed her up too much with worldly cares, she has generously handed over to the laity.

Her other duties absorb all her attention,—those principally which consist in defending till death the pious foundations of which she is the trustee, in allowing no diminution of them, and in transmitting them with increased wealth to future generations. In these respects she is truly heroic, ready for martyrdom, if necessary. In 1788, the State, weighed down with debt, and driven to its last extremity, at a loss to devise new schemes for draining a ruined people, applies as a suppliant to the clergy, and entreats them to pay their taxes. Their answer is admirable, and should never be forgotten : "No, the *people* of France is not taxable at pleasure."

What ! invoke the name of the people as a ground to excuse themselves from succouring the people ? That was the utmost, truly the sublimest pitch, which Pharisean wisdom could ever

hope to attain. Come at length to the ever-memorable year of '89. The clergy is after all but mortal. It must share the common lot. But it can *enjoy the thought*, so consoling in our last moments, to have been consistent till death.

The mystery of Christianity, a God giving himself to man—a God descending into man,—that doctrine, harsh to reason, could be imposed on the heart only by the visible continuation of the miracle,—alms ever flowing without a capability of exhaustion, and spiritual alms deriving a never-failing support from a similar doctrine ; in this you might see some evidence of a God ever present in his Church. But the Church of the eighteenth century, sterile, and no longer giving anything, either material or intellectual, demonstrates precisely the very contrary of what religion teaches, (Oh, impiety !) I mean, “The absence of God in man.”

SECTION IV.

ROYAL POPULARITY.

IN the eighteenth century, the people no longer hoped for anything from that patronage which supported them at other times,—the clergy and the nobility. These will do nothing for them. But they still believe in the king ; they transfer to the infant Louis XV. both their faith and their necessity of loving. He, the only remains of so great a family, saved like the infant Joas, is preserved apparently that he may himself save others. They weep on beholding that child ! How many evil years have to run their course ! But they wait with patience, and still hope ; that minority, that long tuition of twenty or thirty years, must have an end.

It was night when the news reached Paris, that Louis XV., on his way to the army, had been seized with illness at Metz. “The people leaped from their beds, rushed out in a tumult, without knowing whither. The churches were thrown open in the middle of the night. Men assembled in the cross-roads, accosted, and asked questions, without knowing one another. In several churches, the priest who pronounced the prayer for recovery of the king, interrupted the chanting with his sobs, and the people responded by their cries and tears. The

courier who brought the news of his recovery, was hugged, and almost stifled; they kissed his horse, and led him in triumph. Every street re-echoed the same joyful cry: '*Le Roi est guéri!*'"

This, in 1744. Louis XV. is named the *Well-beloved*. Ten years pass. The same people believe that the well-beloved takes baths of human blood; that, in order to renew his exhausted frame, he bathes himself in children's blood. One day, when the police, according to their atrocious custom, were carrying off men, children wandering in the streets, and little girls (especially such as were pretty), the mothers screamed, the people flocked together, and a riot broke out. From that moment, the king never resided in Paris. He seldom passed through it, except to go from Versailles to Compiègne. He had a road made in great haste, which avoided Paris, and enabled the king to escape the observation of his people. That road is still called *Le Chemin de la Révolte*.

These ten years (1744—1754) are the very crisis of the century. The king, that God, that idol, becomes an object of horror. The dogma of the regal incarnation perishes irrecoverably. And in its place arises the sovereignty of the mind. Montesquieu, Buffon, and Voltaire, in that short interval publish their grand works; Rousseau was just beginning his.

Unity till then had reposed on the idea of an incarnation, either religious or political. A human God was an essential requisite—a God of flesh, for the purpose of uniting either the church or the state. Humanity, still feeble, placed its unity in a sign, a visible living sign, a man, an individual. Henceforth, unity, more pure, and free from this material condition, will consist in the union of hearts, the community of the mind, the profound union of sentiments and ideas arising from identity of opinions.

The great doctors of the new church, mentioned before, though dissenting in secondary matters, are admirably agreed on two essential points, which constitute the genius of the age in which they lived, as well as that of future times.

1st. Their mind is free from all forms of incarnation; disentangled from that corporeal vesture which had so long invested it.

2dly. The mind, in their opinion, is not only intelligence; it

is warmth, love, an ardent love for mankind: love in itself, and not subject to certain dogmata, or conditions of religious policy. The *charity* of the middle ages, a slave to Theology, but too easily followed her imperious mistress; too docile, indeed, and so conciliating as to admit whatever could be tolerated by hate. What is the value of a charity which could enact the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, fire the faggots at the stake, and organise the Inquisition?

Whilst endeavouring to divest religion of its carnal character, and to reject the doctrine of a religious incarnation, this century, at first timid in its audacity, remained for a long time carnal in its politics, and seemed anxious to respect the doctrine of a regal incarnation,—and through the king, that God-man, to achieve the happiness of mankind. It is the chimera of the philosophers and economists, of such men, I mean, as Voltaire and Turgot, to accomplish the revolution by the king.

Nothing is more curious than to behold this idol disputed as it were by both parties. The philosophers pull him to the right, the priests to the left. Who will carry him off? Women. This god is a god of flesh.

The woman who secures him for twenty years, Madame de Pompadour (whose maiden name was Poisson) would like, at first, to make an ally for herself of the public, against the court. The philosophers are summoned. Voltaire writes the king's history, and poems and dramas for the king; d'Argenson is made minister; and the comptroller-general, Machault, demands a statement of ecclesiastical property. That blow awakens the clergy. The Jesuits do not waste time in arguing the point with a woman; they bring another woman to oppose her, and they triumph. But what woman? The king's own daughter. Here we want Suetonius. Such things had never been since the days of the twelve Cæsars.

Voltaire was dismissed; and so was d'Argenson, and Machault later. Madame de Pompadour humbled herself, took the Communion, and put herself at the feet of the queen. Meanwhile, she was preparing an infamous and pitiful machine, whereby she regained and kept possession of the king till his death: a seraglio, recruited by children whom they bought.

And there slowly expired Louis XV. The god of flesh abdicated every vestige of mind.

Avoiding Paris, shunning his people, ever shut up at Versailles, he finds even there too many people, too much daylight. He wants a shadowy retreat, the wood, the chace, the secret lodge of Trianon, or his convent of the Parc-aux-cerfs.

How strange and inexplicable that those *amours*, at least those shadows, those images of love, cannot soften his heart. He purchases the daughters of the people; by them he lives with the people; he receives their childish caresses, and assumes their language. Yet he remains the enemy of the people; hard-hearted, selfish, and unfeeling; he transforms the king into a dealer in corn, a speculator in famine.

In that soul, so dead to sentiment, one thing still remained alive: the fear of dying. He was ever speaking of death, of funerals, and of the grave. He would often forebode the death of the monarchy; but provided it lasted his time, he desired no more.

In a year of scarcity (they were not uncommon then), he was hunting, as usual, in the forest of Sénart. He met a peasant carrying a bier, and inquired "whither he was conveying it?—To such a place.—For a man or woman?—A man.—What did he die of?—Hunger."

SECTION V.

NO HOPE BUT JUSTICE.

THAT dead man is Ancient France, and that bier, the coffin of the Ancient Monarchy. Therein let us bury, and for ever, the dreams in which we once fondly trusted,—paternal royalty, the government of grace, the clemency of the monarch, and the charity of the priest; filial confidence, implicit belief in the gods here below.

That fiction of the old world,—that deceitful legend, which was ever on its tongue,—was to substitute *love in the place of law*.

If that world, almost annihilated under the title of love, wounded by charity, and heart-broken by grace, can revive, it will revive by the means of law, justice, and equity.

O blasphemy! They had opposed grace to law, love to justice. As if unjust grace could still be grace as if those

things which our weakness divides, were not two aspects of the same truth,—the right and the left-hand of God.

They have made justice a negative thing, which forbids, prohibits, excludes,—an obstacle to impede, and a knife to slaughter. They do not know that justice is the eye of Providence. Love, blind among us, clear-sighted in God, sees by justice—a vital-absorbing glance. A prolific power is in the justice of God ; whenever it touches the earth, the latter is blest, and brings forth. The sun and the dew are not enough, it must have Justice. Let her but appear, and the harvests come. Harvests of men and nations will spring up, put forth, and flourish in the sunshine of equity.

A day of justice, one single day, which is called the Revolution, produced ten millions of men.

But how far off? Did it appear, in the middle of the eighteenth century, remote and impossible? Of what materials shall I compose it? all is perishing around me. To build, I should want stones, lime, and cement ; and I am empty-handed. The two saviours of this people—the priest and the king—have destroyed them, beyond the possibility of restoration. Feudal life and municipal life are no more,—both swallowed up in royalty. Religious life became extinct with the clergy. Alas! not even a local legend or national tradition remains:—no more of those happy prejudices which constitute the life of an infant people. They have destroyed everything, even popular delusions. Behold them now stripped and empty,—*tabula rasa*; the future must write as best it may.

O, pure spirit, last inhabitant of that destroyed world; universal heir of all those extinct powers, how wilt thou guide us to the only bestower of life? How wilt thou restore to us Justice and the idea of Right?

Here, thou beholdest nothing but stumbling-blocks, old ruins, that one must pull down, crumble to powder, and neglect. Nothing is standing, nothing living. Do what thou wilt, thou wilt have at least the consolation of having destroyed only that which was already dead.

The working of the pure spirit is even that of God—the art of God is its art. Its construction is too profoundly harmonious within, to appear so without. Seek not here the straight lines and the angles, the stiff regularity of your buildings of

stone and marble. In a living organisation, harmony of a far superior strength is ever deeply seated within.

First, let this new world have material life ; let us give it for a beginning, for a first foundation,—the colossal *Histoire Naturelle* : * let us put order in Nature ; for her order is justice.

But order is as yet impossible. From the bosom of Nature, —glowing, boiling, as when Etna awakes,—flames forth an immense volcano.† Every science and every art bursts forth. The eruption over, a mass remains,—an enormous mass mingled with dross and gold : the *Encyclopédie*.

Behold two ages of the young world,—two days of the creation. Order is wanting, and so is Unity. Let us make man, the unity of the world, and with him let Order come, and with her, the Divinity whose advent we expect, the long-desired majesty of Divine Justice.

Man appears under three figures : Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau, three interpreters of the Just and Right.

Let us note law ; let us seek law ; perhaps we may yet find it in some corner of the globe. There may perhaps be some clime favourable for justice,—some better land which naturally yields the fruit of equity. The traveller, the inquirer, who pursues it through the earth, is the calm, majestic Montesquieu. But justice flies before him ; it remains relative and moveable ; law, in his estimation, is a relation,—merely abstract, and inanimate ; it is not endowed with vitality.‡

Montesquieu may be resigned to this result ; but not so Voltaire. Voltaire is the one who suffers, who has taken upon him all the agony of mankind, who feels and hunts out every iniquity. All the ills that fanaticism and tyranny have ever inflicted upon the world, have been inflicted upon Voltaire. It was he, the martyr, the universal victim, whom they slaughtered in their Saint Bartholomew, whom they buried in the mines of the new

* Buffon ; the first volume, 1748. See the edition of MM. Geoffroy-Saint-Hilaire.

† Diderot, who published the two first volumes of the *Encyclopédie* in 1751. M. Génin has just written an article on him, which everybody will find witty, brilliant, full of amusement, charming. I find it penetrating ; it goes to the very marrow of the subject.

‡ Montesquieu's *Esprit des Loix* appeared in 1748. I shall frequently have occasion to explain how very little that great genius possessed the perception of Right. He is, unwittingly, the founder of our absurd English school.

world, whom they burned at Seville, whom the parliament of Toulouse broke on the wheel with Calas.—He weeps, he laughs, in his agony,—a terrible laugh, at which the bastilles of tyrants and the temples of the Pharisees fall to the ground.*

And down fell at the same time all those petty barriers within which every church intrenched itself, calling itself universal, and wishing to destroy all others. They fall before Voltaire, to make room for the *human* church, for that catholic church which will receive and contain them all in justice and in peace.

Voltaire is the witness of Right,—its apostle and its martyr. He has settled the old question put from the origin of the world: Is there religion without justice, without humanity?

SECTION VI.

THE THREE MASTER MINDS.

MONTESQUIEU is the writer, the interpreter of Right; Voltaire weeps and clamours for it; and Rousseau founds it.

It was a grand moment, which found Voltaire overwhelmed by a new calamity, the disaster of Lisbon; when, blinded by tears, and doubting Heaven, Rousseau comforted him, restored God to him, and upon the ruins of the world proclaimed the existence of Providence.

Far more than Lisbon, it is the world which is tumbling to pieces. Religion and the State, morals and laws, everything is perishing.—And where is the family? Where is love?—even the child—the future? Oh! what must we think of a world wherein even maternal love is perishing?

And is it thou, poor, ignorant, lonely, abandoned workman, hated by the philosophers and detested by the clergy, sick in the depth of winter, dying upon the snow, in thy unprotected pavilion of Montmorenci, who art willing to resist alone, and to write (though the ink freezes in thy pen) to protest against death!

* Read, on Voltaire, four pages, stamped with the seal of genius, which no man of mere talent could ever have written.—Quinet, *Ultramontanism*.—(See my translation of this book, *Roman Church and Modern Society*, pp. 117, 118, 119, 120. Chapman: London 1845, C.C.)

Is it indeed with thy spinet and thy "Village Curate," poor musician, that thou art going to re-construct a world? Thou hadst a slender voice, some energy and warmth of language on thy arrival at Paris, rich in thy Pergolèse, in music, and in hope. It is long since then; soon thou wilt have lived half a century; thou art old; all is over. Why dost thou speak of regeneration to that dying society, when thou thyself art no more?

Yes, it was truly difficult, even for a man less cruelly treated by fate, to extricate his feet from the quicksand, from that deep mire where everything was swallowed up.

What was the resting-point whereon that strong man, finding a footing, stopped, held fast—and everything stood firm?

What footing did he find? O feeble world, O ye of little faith, degenerate sons, forgetful of Rousseau and the Revolution?

He found it in what has grown too faint among you—in his heart. In the depths of his suffering he read, and read distinctly, what the middle ages were never able to read: *A Just God*. And what was said by a glorious child of Rousseau? "*Right is the sovereign of the world.*"

That splendid motto was uttered only at the end of the century; it is its revelation,—its profound and sublime formula.

Rousseau spoke by the mouth of another, by Mirabeau; yet it is no less the soul of Rousseau's genius. When once he severed himself from the false science of the time, and from a no less false society, you behold in his writings the dawn of a celestial effulgence,—Duty, Right!

Its sweet and prolific power shines forth in all its brilliancy in the profession of faith of the Vicar of Savoy. God himself subject to Justice, subject to Right!—Let us say rather that God and Right are identical.

If Rousseau had spoken in the terms of Mirabeau, his language would not have taken effect. Necessities change with the times.—To a world ready to act, on the very day of action, Mirabeau said: "Right is the sovereign of the world," you are the subjects of Right.—To a world still slumbering, inert, feeble, and devoid of energy, Rousseau said, and said well: "The general will is right and reason." Your will is Right. Then arouse yourselves, ye slaves!

"Your collective will is Reason herself." In other words, Ye are Gods!

And who, indeed, without believing himself God, could ever do anything great? Then it is that you may fearlessly cross the bridge of Arcola; then it is, that, in the name of duty, you sever yourself from your dearest affections, your heart.

Let us be God! The impossible becomes possible and easy. Then, to overthrow a world is a mere trifle; why, one creates a world:

This it is which explains how a feeble breath from a manly breast, a simple melody arising from the heart of the poor musician, raised the dead.

France is moved in her inmost soul. All Europe is changed by it. The vast massy German empire rocks on her old foundations. They criticise, but obey. "Mere sentimentality," say they, with an attempt to smile. And yet these dreamers follow it. The very philosophers, the abstractors of quintessence, take, in spite of themselves, the simple path of the poor Vicar of Savoy.

What, then, has happened? What divine light has shone, to produce so great a change? Is it the power of an idea, of a new inspiration, of a revelation from above? Yes, there has been a revelation. But the novelty of the doctrine is not what affects us most. We have here a more strange, a more mysterious phenomenon,—an influence felt even by those who do not read, and could never comprehend. Nobody knows why, but since that glowing language impregnated the air, the temperature has changed; it seems as though a breath of life had been wafted over the world; the earth begins to bear fruits that she would never else have borne.

What is it? Shall I tell you? It is what vivifies and melts the heart; it is the breath of youth; and that is why we all yield to its influence. In vain would you prove to us that this language is weak, or overstrained, or of vulgar sentiment. Such is youth and such is passion. Such have we been, and, if we occasionally recognise therein the foibles of our early youth, we do but feel more vividly the sweet yet bitter charms of the time that will return no more.

Warmth and thrilling melody, such is the magic of Rousseau. His power, as it is in his "Emile" and the "*Contrat Social*,"

may be discussed and combated. But, by his "Confessions" and his "Reveries," by his weakness, he has vanquished us, and drawn tears from every eye.

Foreign, hostile geniuses were able to reject the light, but they have all felt the influence of the warmth. They did not listen to the words; but the music subdued them. The gods of profound harmony, the rivals of the storm, which thundered from the Rhine to the Alps, themselves felt the all-powerful incantation of that sweet melody, that soft human voice,—the little morning ditty, sung for the first time beneath the vine at Charmettes.

That youthful affecting voice, that melody of the heart, is heard long after that tender heart has been buried in the earth. The "Confessions," which appeared after the death of Rousseau, seem a sigh from the tomb. He returns—rises from the dead, more potent, more admired, more adored than ever.

That miracle he shares in common with his rival, Voltaire. His rival?—No. Enemy?—No. Let them be for ever upon the same pedestal, those two Apostles of Humanity.*

Voltaire, nearly octogenarian, buried among the snows of the Alps, broken down by age and labour, nevertheless rises also from the dead. The grand thought of the century, inaugurated by him, is also to be closed by him; he who was the first to open, is also to resume and finish the chorus. Glorious century! Well does it deserve to be called for ever the heroic age of the mind. An old man on the verge of the grave; he has seen the others, Montesquieu, Diderot, and Buffon pass away; he has witnessed the extraordinary success of Rousseau,—three books in three years. "And the earth was silent." Voltaire is not discouraged; behold him entering, lively and young, upon a new career. Where, then, is the old Voltaire? He was dead. But a voice has roused him all alive from the tomb, that voice which had ever given him life,—the voice of Humanity.

* A noble and tender idea of Madame Sand, which shows how genius rises superior to those vain oppositions which the *esprit de système* creates for itself between those great witnesses, of truth not opposed, but harmonising. When it was lately proposed to raise statues to Voltaire and Rousseau, Madame Sand, in an admirable letter, requested that the two reconciled geniuses might be placed upon the same pedestal. Noble thoughts come from the heart.

Ancient champion, to thee the crown ! Here thou art again, conqueror of conquerors. Throughout a century, in every kind of warfare, with every weapon and doctrine, opposite, contrary, no matter what, thou hast pursued, without ever deviating, one interest, one cause—holy Humanity. And yet they have called thee a sceptic ! And they have termed thee changeable ! They thought to surprise thee in the seeming contradictions of a flexible language ever serving the selfsame thought !

Thy faith shall be crowned by the very work of faith. Others have spoken of Justice, but thou shalt perform it ; thy words are acts, realities. Thou defendest Calas and La Barre, thou savest Sirven, and dost annihilate the scaffold of the Protestants. Thou hast conquered for religious liberty, and moreover, for civil freedom, as advocate of the last serfs, for the reform of our barbarous legislation and criminal laws, which themselves were crimes.

Behold in all this the dawn of the Revolution. Thou dost make it, and see it. Look for thy reward, look, behold it yonder ! Now thou mayest die ; thy firm faith deserved that thou shouldst not take thy flight before thou hadst seen the holy land.

SECTION VII.

THE REVOLUTION COMMENCES.

WHEN those two men have passed, the Revolution is accomplished in the intellectual world.

Now it becomes the duty of their sons, legitimate and illegitimate, to expound and diffuse it in a hundred ways : some in eloquence and fiery satire, others will strike bronze medals to transmit it from hand to hand ; Mirabeau, Beaumarchais, Raynal, Mably, and Sieyès, are now to do their work.

The Revolution is on her march, with Rousseau and Voltaire still in front. Kings themselves are in her train ; Frederick, Catherine, Joseph, Leopold—that is the court of the two chieftains of the age. Reign, great men, ye true sovereigns of the world ; reign, O my kings !

All appear converted, all wish for the Revolution ; though every one, it is true, wishes it, not for himself, but for others.

The nobility would willingly make it against the clergy, and the clergy against the nobility.

Turgot is the touchstone for all : he summons them to say whether they wish truly to amend ; they all unanimously answer : No, let what ought to be done, be done !

Meanwhile, I see the Revolution everywhere, even in Versailles. All admit it to a certain limit, where it will not hurt them : Louis XVI. as far as the plans of Fenelon and the Duke of Burgundy, and the Count d'Artois as far as Figaro ; he forces the king to allow the trying drama to be played. The queen wishes for the Revolution, at least in her palace, for the *parvenus* ; that queen, devoid of prejudices, turns all her grand ladies out of doors, in order to keep her beautiful friend Madame de Polignac.

Necker, the *borrower*, himself discredits his loans by publishing the misery of the monarchy. A *revolutionnaire* by publicity, he believes he is so by his little provincial assemblies, wherein the privileged are to say what must be taken from the privileged.

The witty Calonne comes next, and being unable to glut the privileged even by breaking into the public treasury, he takes his course, accuses them, and hands them over to the hatred of the people.

He has accomplished the Revolution against the notables ; Lomenie, a philosophical priest, accomplishes it against the parliaments.

Calonne said admirably, when he avowed the *deficit*, and pointed to the yawning gulf : " What remains to fill it with ? *The abuses.*"

That seemed clear to everybody ; the only thing obscure was whether Calonne did not speak in the name of *the very Prince of abuses*, of him who sustained all others, and was the keystone of the whole wretched edifice ? In two words, was Royalty the support or the remedy of those abuses denounced by the King's own creature.

That the clergy was an abuse, and the nobility an abuse, seemed but too evident.

The privilege of the clergy, founded on teaching, and the example they formerly set the people, had become nonsense ; nobody possessed the faith less. In their last assembly, they

strive hard to get the philosophers punished, and, to make the demand, they are represented by an atheist and a sceptic : Loménie and Talleyrand.

The privilege of the nobility had likewise become nonsense : formerly they paid nothing because they paid with their sword ; they furnished the *ban* and *arrière-ban* ; a vast undisciplined multitude, called together for the last time in 1674. They continued to furnish the army with officers, by shutting out all others from the career, and rendering the formation of a real army impossible. The civil army, the administration, the bureau-cracy, was invaded by the nobility ; the ecclesiastical army, in its higher ranks, was also filled with nobles. Those who made it their profession to live in grand style, that is to say, to do nothing, had undertaken to do all ; and everything remained undone.

Once more, the clergy and the nobility were a burden to the land, the malediction of the country, a gangrene which it was necessary to cut away ; that was as clear as daylight to everybody.

The only obscure question was that of Royalty ; a question, not of mere form, as people have so often repeated, but a fundamental, intimate question, more vital than any other in France ; a question not only of politics, but of love and religion. No people ever loved their kings so dearly.

The eyes of men, open under Louis XV., shut again under Louis XVI., and the question remained once more in the dark. The hope of the people still clung to royalty ; Turgot hoped, Voltaire hoped, that poor young king, so ill born and bred, would have desired to do good. He struggled, and was dragged away. The prejudices of his birth and education, even his hereditary virtues, hurried him to his ruin—a sad historical problem ! Honest men have excused him, and honest men have condemned him. Duplicity, mental reservations, (but little surprising, no doubt, in a pupil of the Jesuit party,) such were his faults ; and lastly his crime, which led him to death, his appeal to foreigners. With all that, let us not forget that he had been sincerely anti-Austrian and anti-English ; that he had truly, fervently desired to improve our navy ; that he had founded Cherbourg at eighteen leagues from Portsmouth ; that he helped to cut England in two, and set one part of England against the other. That tear which Carnot shed

on signing his death-warrant, remains for him in history ; History, and even Justice, in judging him, will weep.

Every day brings on his punishment. This is not the time for me to relate these things. Let it suffice to say here that the best was the last—great lesson of Providence !—so that it might appear plain to all that the evil was less in the man than in the institution itself ; that it might be more than the condemnation of the king—the condemnation of ancient royalty. That religion is at an end. Louis XV. or Louis XVI., infamous or honest, the god is nevertheless still a man ; if he be not so by vice, he is by virtue, by easy good nature. Human and feeble, incapable of refusing, of resisting, every day sacrificing the people to the courtiers, and like the God of the priests, damning the many, and saving his *elect*.

As we have already said : The *religion of grace*, partial for the elect, and the *government of grace*, in the hands of favourites, are perfectly analogous. Privileged mendicity, whether it be filthy and monastic, or gilded, as at Versailles, is ever mendicity. Two paternal powers : ecclesiastical paternity, characterised by the Inquisition ; and monarchical paternity, by the Red Book and the Bastille.

SECTION VIII.

THE RED BOOK.

WHEN Queen Anne of Austria was regent, “there remained,” says Cardinal Retz, “but two little words in the language : ‘The queen is so good !’”

From that day France declines in energy ; the elevation of the lower classes, which notwithstanding the harsh administration of Richelieu had been so remarkable, subsides and disappears. Wherefore ? Because the “queen is good ;” she loads with presents the brilliant crowd besetting her palace ; all the provincial nobility who fled under Richelieu return, demand, obtain, take, and pillage ; the least they expect is to be exempted from taxation. The peasant who has managed to purchase a few acres has the sole duty of payment ; he must bear all—he is obliged to sell again, and once more becomes a tenant, steward, or a poor domestic.

Louis XIV. is severe at first ; no exemption from taxes ; Colbert cancels 40,000 of them. The country thrives. But Louis XIV. grows good-natured ; he is more and more affected by the fate of the poor nobility ; everything is for them,—grades, places, pensions, even benefices, and Saint-Cyr for noble young ladies. The nobility flourishes, and France is at her last extremity.

Louis XVI. is also severe at first, grumbles, and even refuses ; the courtiers jest bitterly about his incivility and rough answers (*coups de boutoir*). The reason is, he has a bad minister—that inflexible Turgot : and, alas ! the queen has no power yet. In 1778, the king at last yields ; the re-action of nature acts powerfully in favour of the queen ; he can no longer refuse anything, neither to her nor to her brother. The most amiable man in France becomes comptroller-general ; M. de Calonne uses as much wit and grace to give, as his predecessors had used skill to elude and refuse. “Madam,” he would say to the queen, “if it be possible, it is done ; if impossible, it shall be done.” The queen purchases Saint Cloud ; the king, so parsimonious till then, allows himself to be seduced, and buys Rambouillet. Vandreuil, the disinterested friend of the Count d’Artois, will receive nothing ; he sells to the crown, for a million, his estates in America, receives them back and keeps them. Who can say how many estates and what sums *Diane de Polignac*, by cleverly directing Jules de Polignac, managed to secure ? The crowned Rosina, having become in course of time Countess Almariva, could refuse nothing to Suzanne,—to the versatile charms of her who was Suzanne or Chérubino.

The Revolution spoiled all. It roughly tore aside the graceful veil that masked the public ruin. The veil, being removed, revealed the vessel of the Danaïdes. The monstrous affair of the Puy Paulin and Fenestrange, those millions squandered (between a famine and a bankruptcy), flung away by a silly woman into a woman’s lap, far surpassed anything that satire had exposed. People laughed,—with horror.

The inflexible reporter of the Committee of Finances acquainted the assembly with a mystery unknown to everybody : “In expenditure, the king is the *sole directeur*.”

The only standard of expenditure was the king’s good nature.

Too tender-hearted to refuse—to grieve those whom he saw about him—he found himself in reality dependent on them. At the slightest inclination towards economy, they were moody and sullen. He was obliged to yield. Several of them were still bolder; they spoke out, loud and resolutely, and took the king to task. M. de Coigny (the queen's first or second lover, according to dates), refused to submit to a retrenchment which they had proposed in one of his enormous pensions; a scene ensued, and he got into a passion with Louis XVI. The king shrugged up his shoulders, and made no answer. In the evening, he said: "Indeed, had he beaten me, I should have submitted to it."

No noble family in difficulties, no illustrious mother marrying her daughter and son, but draws money from the king. "Those great families contribute to the splendour of the monarchy and the glory of the throne," &c. &c. The king signs with a heavy heart, and copies into his Red Book: To Madam —, 500,000 francs. The lady carries the order to the minister: "I have no money, Madam." She insists, threatens; she may be troublesome, being in high favour with the queen. The minister ultimately finds the money. He will rather postpone, like Loménie, the payment of the small pensioners; let them starve, if they will; or else, as he did, he will take the charitable funds intended to repair the disasters of storms and fire; nay, even plunder the funds of the hospitals.

France is in good hands. Everything is going on well. So good-natured a king, such an amiable queen. The only difficulty is, that, independently of the privileged paupers at Versailles, there is another class, no less noble, and far more numerous, the provincial privileged paupers, who have nothing, receive nothing, say they; they rend the air with their exclamations. Those men, long before the people, will begin the Revolution.

By-the-bye, there is a people. Between these paupers and those paupers, who are all persons of fortune, we had forgotten the people.

The people! Oh! that is the business of the farmers of the revenue. Things are altered. Formerly, financiers were hard-hearted men. Now they are all philanthropists, kind, amiable, and magnificent; with one hand they starve, it is

true ; but often they nourish with the other. They reduce thousands to beggary, and give alms. They build hospitals, and fill them.

“Persepolis,” says Voltaire, in one of his stories, “has thirty kings of finance, who draw millions from the people and give a little to the king.” Out of the *gabelle**, for instance, which brought in one hundred and twenty millions, the *Ferme générale* kept back sixty, and deigned to leave some fifty or sixty for the king.

Tax-gathering was nothing but an organised warfare ; it caused an army of two hundred thousand drones to oppress the soil. Those locusts devoured,—wasted everything. To drain substance out of a people, thus devoured, it was necessary to have cruel laws, terrible penalties, the galleys, gibbets, racks. The farming agents were authorised to employ arms ; they murdered, and were afterwards judged by the special tribunals of the *Ferme générale*.

The most shocking part of the system was the easy good nature of the king and the farmers of the revenue. On one hand the king, on the other the thirty kings of the exchequer, gave away (or sold cheap) exemptions from taxation ; the king created nobles ; the farmers created for themselves fictitious *employés*, who, under that title, were exempt. Thus, the exchequer was working against itself ; whilst it was augmenting the sum to be paid, it diminished the number of the payers ; the load weighing upon fewer shoulders, became more and more oppressive.

The two privileged orders paid whatever they pleased,—the clergy a gratuitous non-collectible tax ; the nobles contributed for certain imposts, but according to whatever they thought proper to declare, which the treasury-agents registered with a bow, without either examination or verification. The neighbours had to pay so much the more.

O, heaven ! O, earth ! O, justice ! If it were through conquest, or by a master's tyranny, that the people were perishing, they could endure it. But they perish through good nature ! They would perhaps endure the hard-heartedness of a Richelieu ; but how can they endure the good nature of Loménie and

* Duties on salt, &c., C.C.

Calonne, the tender-heartedness of the financiers, and the philanthropy of the farmers of the revenue !

Suffer and die : be it so ! But to suffer *by election*, to die through mere necessity—so that *grace* for one is death and ruin for the other ! Oh ! that is too much, too much by half.

Kind-hearted men, you who weep over the evils of the Revolution (doubtless with too much reason), shed also a few tears for the evils which occasioned it.

Come and see, I beseech you, this people lying in the dust, like poor Job, amid their false friends, their patrons, their influential protectors—the clergy and royalty. Behold the look of anguish that they turn upon their king, without speaking. What language is in that look !

“ O king, whom I made my god, to whom I erected an altar, and to whom I prayed even before God himself, from whom, in the jaws of death, I implored for salvation ; you, my only hope, you, whom I have adored. What ! have you then felt nothing ? ”

SECTION IX.

THE BASTILLE.

THE illustrious Quesnay, physician to Louis XV. and to Madame de Pompadour, who lived in the house of the latter at Versailles, saw the king one day rush in suddenly, and felt alarmed. Madame du Hausset, the witty *femme de chambre*, who has left such curious memoirs, inquired of him why he seemed so uneasy. “ Madam,” returned he, “ whenever I see the king, I say to myself : ‘ There is a man who can cut my head off.’ ” “ Oh ! ” said she “ the king is *too good* ! ”

The lady’s maid thus summed up, in one word, the guarantees of the monarchy.

The king was too good to cut a man’s head off ; that was no longer agreeable to custom. But he could, with one word, send him to the Bastille, and there *forget* him.

It remains to be decided *which* is best,—to perish by one blow, or to suffer a lingering death for thirty or forty years.

There were some twenty Bastilles in France, of which six only (in 1775) contained three hundred prisoners. At Paris,

in '79, there were about thirty prisons where people might be incarcerated without any sentence. An infinite number of convents were subsidiary to these Bastilles.

All these state-prisons, towards the close of the reign of Louis XIV., were, like everything else, controlled by the Jesuits. They were, in their hands, instruments of torture for the Protestants and the Jansenists—dens for conversion. A secrecy more profound than that of the *leads* and the *wells* of Venice, the oblivion of the tomb, enshrouded everything. The Jesuits were the confessors of the Bastille, and of many other prisons; the prisoners who died were buried under false names in the church of the Jesuits. Every means of terror was in their hands, especially those dungeons whence the prisoners occasionally came out with their ears or noses gnawed away by the rats. Not only of terror, but of flattery also—both so potent with female prisoners. The almoner, to render grace more efficacious, employed even *culinary* arguments, starving, feeding, pampering the fair captive according as she yielded or resisted. More than one state-prison is mentioned in which the gaolers and the Jesuits paid alternate visits to the female prisoners, and had children by them. One preferred to strangle herself.

The lieutenant of police went, from time to time, to breakfast at the Bastille. That was reckoned as a visit,—a magisterial supervision. That magistrate was ignorant of everything; and yet it was he alone who gave an account to the minister. One family, one dynasty, Châteauneuf, his son La Vrillière, and his grandson Saint-Florentin (who died in 1777) possessed, for a century, the department of the state-prisons and the *lettres-de-cachet*. For this dynasty to subsist, it was necessary to have prisoners; when the Protestants were liberated, their places were filled up with the Jansenists; next, they took men of letters, philosophers, the Voltaires, Frèrets, Diderots. The minister used to give generously blank *lettres-de-cachet* to the intendants, the bishops, and people in the administration. Saint-Florentin, alone, gave away as many as 50,000. Never had man's dearest treasure, liberty, been more lavishly squandered. These letters were the object of a profitable traffic; they were sold to fathers who wanted to get rid of their sons, and given to pretty women, who were inconvenienced by their husbands. This last cause of imprisonment was one of the most common.

And all through good-nature. The king was too good to refuse a *lettre-de-cachet* to a great lord. The intendent was too good-natured not to grant one at a lady's request. The government-clerks, the mistresses of the clerks, and the friends of these mistresses, through good-nature, civility, or mere politeness, obtained, gave, or lent, those terrible orders by which a man was buried alive. Buried;—for such was the carelessness and levity of those amiable clerks,—almost all nobles, fashionable men, all occupied with their pleasures,—that they never had the time, when once the poor fellow was shut up, to think of his position.

Thus, the *government of grace*, with all its advantages,—descending from the king to the lowest clerk in the administration,—disposed, according to caprice or fancy, of liberty, of life.

Let us understand this system well. Why does such an one succeed? What does he possess, that everything should thrive with him? He has the grace of God, and the king's good grace. Let him who is in disgrace, in this world of grace, go out of the world,—banished, sentenced, and damned.

The Bastille, the *lettre-de-cachet*, is the king's excommunication.

Are the excommunicated to die? No. It would require a decision of the king, a resolution painful to take, which would grieve the king himself. It would be a judgment between him and his conscience. Let us save him the task of judging, of killing. There is a middle term between life and death: a lifeless, buried life. Let us organize a world expressly for oblivion. Let us set falsehood at the gates within and without, in order that life and death be ever uncertain. The living corpse no longer knew anything about his family. "But my wife?" Thy wife is dead—I make a mistake—re-married. "Are any of my friends alive? Do they ever remember me?" "Thy friends, poor fool, why, they were the persons who betrayed thee." Thus the soul of the miserable prisoner, a prey to their ferocious merriment, is fed on derision, calumny, and lies.

Forgotten! O terrible word! That a soul should perish among souls! Had not he whom God created for life the right to live at least in the mind? What mortal shall dare

inflict, even on the most guilty, this worst of deaths,—to be eternally forgotten ?

No, do not believe it. Nothing is forgotten,—neither man nor thing. What once has been, cannot be thus annihilated. The very walls will not forget, the pavement will become accomplice, and convey sounds and noises ; the air will not forget ; from that small skylight, where a poor girl is sewing, at the Porte Saint-Antoine, they have seen and understood. Nay, the very Bastille itself will be affected. That surly turnkey is still a man. I see inscribed upon the walls the hymn of a prisoner to the glory of a gaoler, his benefactor.—Poor benefit ! A shirt that he gave to that Lazarus, barbarously abandoned, devoured by vermin in his tomb !

Whilst I have been writing these lines, a mountain, a Bastille has been crushing my breast. Alas ! why stay so long talking of dilapidated prisons, and wretches whom death has delivered ? The world is covered with prisons, from Spielberg to Siberia, from Spandau to Mont-St.-Michel. The world is a prison !

Vast silence of the globe, stifled groans and sobs from the ever-silent earth, I hear you but too plainly. The captive mind, dumb among inferior animals, and musing in the barbarous world of Africa and Asia, thinks, and suffers in our Europe !

Where does it speak, if not in France, in spite of chains ? It is ever here that the mute genius of the earth finds a voice,—an organ. The world thinks, France speaks.

And it is precisely on that account that the Bastille of France, the Bastille of Paris (I would rather say the prison of thought), was, of all other Bastilles, execrable, infamous, and accursed. From the last century, Paris was already the voice of the globe. The earth spoke by the voice of three men—Voltaire, Jean-Jacques, and Montesquieu. That the interpreters of the world should behold unworthy threats perpetually suspended over them, that the narrow issue through which the agony of mankind could breathe its sighs, should ever be shut up, was beyond human endurance.

Our fathers shivered that Bastille to pieces, tore away its stones with their bleeding hands, and flung them afar. Afterwards, they seized them again ; and, having hewn them into

a different form, in order that they might be trampled under foot by the people for ever, built with them the Bridge of Revolution!

All other prisons had become more merciful; but this one had become more cruel. From reign to reign, they diminished what the gaolers would laughingly term,—the liberties of the Bastille. The windows were walled up one after another, and other bars were added. During the reign of Louis XVI., the use of the garden and the walk on the towers were prohibited.

About this period two circumstances occurred which added to the general indignation,—Linguet's memoirs, which made people acquainted with the ignoble and ferocious interior; and, what was more decisive, the unwritten, unprinted case of Latude: whispered mysteriously, and transmitted from mouth to mouth, its effect was only rendered more terrible.

For my part, I must acknowledge the extremely agonizing effect which the prisoner's letters produced on me. Though a sworn enemy to barbarous fictions about everlasting punishments, I found myself praying to God to construct a hell for tyrants.

Ah! M. de Sartines, Ah! Madame de Pompadour, how heavy is your burden! How plainly do we perceive, by that history, how, having once embraced injustice, we go on from bad to worse; how terror, descending from the tyrant to the slave, returns again more forcibly to torment the tyrant. Having once kept this man a prisoner without judgment, for some trifling fault, Madame de Pompadour and M. de Sartines are obliged to hold him captive for ever, and seal over him with an eternal stone the hell of silence.

But that cannot be. That stone is ever restless; and a low, terrible voice—a sulphurous blast—is ever arising. In '81, Sartines feels its dread effect,—in '84, the king himself is hurt by it,—in '89, the people know all, see all, even the ladder by which the prisoner escaped. In '93, they guillotine the family of Sartines.

For the confusion of tyrants, it so happened that they had in that prisoner confined a daring, terrible man, whom nothing could subdue, whose voice shook the very walls, whose spirit and audacity were invincible. A body of iron, indestructible, which was to wear out all their prisons, the Bastille, Vincennes,

Charenton, and lastly the horrors of Bicêtre, wherein any other would have perished.

What makes the accusation heavy, overwhelming, and without appeal, is, that this man, good or bad, after escaping twice, twice surrendered himself by his own acts. Once, from his hiding-place, he wrote to Madame de Pompadour, and she caused him to be seized again ! The second time, he goes to Versailles, wishes to speak to the king, reaches his antechamber, and she orders him again to be seized. What ! In not even the king's apartment a sacred asylum ?

I am unfortunately obliged to say that in the feeble, effeminate, declining society of that period, there were a great many philanthropists,—ministers, magistrates, and great lords, to mourn over the adventure ; but not one stirred. Malesherbes wept, and so did Gourgues, and Lamoignon, and Rohan,—they all wept bitterly.

He was lying upon his dunghill at Bicêtre, *literally* devoured by vermin, lodged under ground, and often howling with hunger. He had addressed one more memorial to some philanthropist or other, by means of a drunken turnkey. The latter luckily lost it, and a woman picked it up. She read it, and shuddered ; *she* did not weep, but acted instantly.

Madame Legros was a poor mercer who lived by her work,—by sewing in her shop ; her husband was a private teacher of Latin. She did not fear to embark in that terrible undertaking. She saw with her firm good sense what others did not, or would not, see : that the wretched man was not mad, but the victim of a frightful necessity, by which the government was obliged to conceal and perpetuate the infamy of its old transgressions. She saw it, and was neither discouraged nor afraid. No heroism was ever more complete : she had the courage to undertake ; the energy to persevere ; and the obstinacy to sacrifice every day and every hour ; the courage to despise the threats, the sagacity, and saintly plots of every kind in order to elude and foil the calumny of the tyrants.

For three consecutive years, she persevered in her endeavours with an unheard-of obstinacy ; employing in the pursuit of justice and equity that singular eagerness peculiar to the huntsman or the gamester, and to which we seldom resort but for the gratification of our evil passions.

All kinds of misfortunes beset her ; but she will not give up the cause. Her father dies ; then her mother ; she loses her little business, is blamed by her relations, nay, subjected to villanous suspicion. They tax her with being the mistress of that prisoner in whom she is so much interested. The mistress of that spectre, that corpse, devoured with filth and vermin !

The temptation of temptations, are these complaints, these unjust suspicions about him for whom she is dying and sacrificing herself !

Oh ! It is a grand sight to see that poor woman, so ill-dressed, begging from door to door, courting the valets to gain admittance into the mansions, pleading her cause before grantees, and demanding their assistance.

The police are furious and indignant. Madame Legros may be kidnapped, shut up, lost for ever ; everybody gives her warning. The lieutenant of police sends for her, and threatens her ; he finds her firm and unalterable ; it is she who makes him tremble.

Happily, they manage to get her the protection of Madame Duchesne, a *femme de chambre* to the princesses. She sets out for Versailles, on foot, in the depth of winter ; she was in the seventh month of her pregnancy. The protectress was absent ; she runs after her, sprains her foot, but still runs on. Madame Duchesne sheds many tears, but alas ! what can she do ? One *femme de chambre* against two or three ministers ;—it is a difficult game ! She was holding the memorial, when an *abbé* of the court, who happened to be present, tore it out of her hands, telling her that it was all about a miserable madman, and that she must not interfere.

Nothing more was wanting to freeze the heart of Marie-Antoinette, who had been made acquainted with the matter. If she had tears in her eyes, and they joked her, all was over.

There was hardly a better man in France than the king. At length they applied to him. Cardinal de Rohan (a debauchee, but charitable after all) spoke three times to Louis XVI., who thrice refused to interfere. Louis XVI. was too good not to believe M. de Sartines. He was no longer in power, but that was no reason for dishonouring him, and handing him over to his enemies. Setting Sartines out of the

question, we must say that Louis XVI. was fond of the Bastille, and would not wrong it, or injure its reputation.

The king was very humane. He had suppressed the deep dungeons of the Châtelet, done away with Vincennes and created La Force to receive prisoners for debt, to separate them from criminals.

But the Bastille ! the Bastille ! That was an old servant not to be lightly ill-treated by the ancient monarchy. It was a mystery of terror, what Tacitus calls, "*Instrumentum regni.*"

When the count d'Artois and the Queen, wishing to have Figaro played, read it to him, he merely observed, as an unanswerable objection, "Then must the Bastille be suppressed ?"

When the Revolution of Paris took place, in July '89, the king, indifferent enough, seemed to be reconciled to the matter. But when he was informed that the Parisian municipality had ordered the demolition of the Bastille, he seemed as if he had been shot to the heart ; "Oh !" said he, "this is awful !"

He was unable, in 1781, to listen to a request that compromised the Bastille. He rejected also the one which Rohan presented to him in favour of Latude. But noble ladies insisted. He then made a conscientious study of the business, read all the papers ; they were few, save those of the police and people interested in keeping the victim in prison until death. At length he decided that he was a dangerous man, and that he could *never* restore him to liberty.

Never ! Any other person would have stopped there. Well then, what is not done by the king shall be done in spite of him. Madame Legros persists. She is well received by the Condé family, ever discontented and grumbling ; welcomed by the young duke of Orleans and his kind-hearted spouse, the daughter of the good Penthievre ; and hailed by the philosophers, by the Marquis de Condorcet, perpetual secretary of the Academy of Sciences, by Dupaty, by Villette, Voltaire's quasi son-in-law, &c. &c.

The public voice murmurs louder and louder, like a flood, or the waves of the rising tide. Necker had dismissed Sartines ; his friend and successor, Lenoir, had also fallen in his turn. Perseverance will presently be crowned. Latude is obstinately bent on living, and Madame Legros as obstinately bent on delivering Latude.

The queen's man, Breteuil, succeeds in '83: he wished to immortalize her. He permits the Academy to award the prize of virtue to Madame Legros,—to crown her—on the singular condition, that the crown should not be required.

At length, in 1784, they force from Louis XVI. the deliverance of Latude.* And a few weeks after, comes a strange and whimsical ordinance enjoining the intendants never more to incarcerate anybody, at the request of families, without a *well-grounded reason*, and to indicate the *duration of confinement*, &c. That is to say, they unveiled the depth of the monstrous abyss of arbitrariness into which France had been plunged. She already knew much; but the government confessed still more.

From the priest to the king, from the Inquisition to the Bastille, the road is straight, but long. Holy, holy Revolution, how slowly dost thou come!—I, who have been waiting for thee for a thousand years in the furrows of the middle ages,—what! must I wait still longer?—Oh! how slowly time passes! Oh! how I have counted the hours!—Wilt thou never arrive?

Men believed no longer in its near approach. All had foreseen the Revolution in the middle of the century. Nobody, at the end, believed in it. Far from Mont-Blanc, you see it; when at its foot, you see it no more.

"Alas! it is all over," said Mably, in 1784; "we have fallen too low; morals have become too depraved. Never, oh! never now will the Revolution appear!"

O ye of little faith, do you not see that as long as it remained among you, philosophers, orators, sophists, it could do nothing? God be praised, now it is everywhere, among the people and in women.—Here is one who, by her persevering, unconquerable will, bursts open the prisons of State; she has taken the Bastille beforehand.—The day when liberty—reason, emerges from arguments, and descends into nature, into the heart (and the heart of hearts is woman), all is over. Everything artificial is destroyed.—O Rousseau, now we

* Latude's admirable letters are still unpublished, save the few quoted by Delort. They refute but too well the vain polemics of 1787.

understand thee ; thou was truly right in saying, " Return to nature ! "

A woman is fighting at the Bastille. Women gain the 5th of October. As early as February '89, I read with emotion the courageous letter of the women and girls of Angers : " Having read the decrees of the male portion of our youthful community (*messieurs de la jeunesse*), we declare that *we will join the nation*, reserving to ourselves the care of the baggage and provisions, and such consolations and services as may depend on us ; we will perish rather than abandon our husbands, lovers, sons, and brothers."

O France, you are saved ! O world, you are saved !—Again do I behold in the heavens my youthful star in which I so long placed my hope,—the star of Joan of Arc. What matters, if the maid, changing her sex, has become a youth, Hoche, Marceau, Joubert, or Kléber !

Grand period, sublime moment, when the most warlike of men are nevertheless the harbingers of peace ! When Right, so long wept for, is found at the end of ages ; when Grace, in whose name Tyranny had crushed us, is found to be consonant, identical with Justice.

What is the ancient *régime*, the king and the priest in the old monarchy ? Tyranny, in the name of Grace.

What is the Revolution ? The re-action of equity, the tardy advent of Eternal Justice.

O Justice, my mother ! Right, my father ! ye who are but one with God !

Whom else should I invoke, I, one of the crowd, one of those ten millions of men, who would never have existed, but for our Revolution.

O Justice, pardon me ! I believed you were austere and hard-hearted, and I did not perceive that you were identical with Love and Grace. And that is why I have been no enthusiast of the middle ages, which have ever repeated the word Love without performing the offices of Love.

But now, absorbed in deep reflection, and with all the ardour of my heart, I humbly crave forgiveness, O heavenly Justice of God.

For thou art truly Love, and identical with Grace.

And as thou art Justice, thou wilt support me in this book,

where my path has been marked out by the emotions of my heart and not by private interest, nor by any thought of this sublunar world. Thou wilt be just towards me, and I will be so towards all. For whom then have I written this, but for thee, Eternal Justice ?

JANUARY 31st, 1847.

BOOK I.

APRIL TO JULY, 1789.

CHAPTER I.

ELECTIONS OF 1789.

The whole People called to choose the Electors, and send in their Complaints and Requests.—The Ministry had relied on the Incapacity of the People.—Certainty of the Popular Instinct; Firmness of the People; their Unanimity.—The Convocation of the States, and the Elections of Paris delayed.—First Act of the Sovereignty of the Nation.—The Electors troubled by a Riot.—The Réveillon Riot and the Persons interested in it.—The Elections completed.—(January to April, 1789.)

THE convocation of the States-General, in 1789, is the true era of the birth of the people. It called the whole nation to the exercise of their rights.

They could at least write their complaints, their wishes, and choose the electors.

Small republican states had already admitted all their members to a participation of political rights; but never had a great kingdom,—an empire like France. The thing was new, not only in French annals, but even in those of the world.

Accordingly, when, for the first time, in the course of ages, these words were heard: *All shall assemble to elect,* all*

* See the *Actes* in the first vol. of the *Moniteur*. The *tax-payers of more than twenty-five years of age* were to choose the electors, who were to name the deputies, and concur in the drawing-up of the *returns*. As taxation affected everybody, at least by poll-tax, the whole of the population, excepting servants, was thus called upon.

shall send in their complaints, there was an immense, profound commotion, like an earthquake; the mass felt the shock even in obscure and mute regions, where movement would have been least expected.

All the towns elected, and not the *good* towns only, as in the ancient States-General; country districts also elected, and not the towns alone.

It is affirmed that five millions of men took part in the election.

Grand, strange, surprising scene! To see a whole people emerging, at once, from nonentity to existence, who, till then silent, suddenly found a voice.

The same appeal of equality was addressed to populations, prodigiously unequal, not only by position, but by worship, by their moral state and ideas. How would that people answer? That was a great question. The exchequer on one side, feudality on the other,* seemed striving to brutalise them under the weight of miseries. Royalty had deprived them of their municipal rights,—of that education which they derived from business connected with the commune. The clergy, the teachers thrust upon them, had not taught them for a long time past. They seemed to have done everything to render them dull, dumb, speechless, and senseless, and then they said to them, “Arise now, walk, and speak!”

They had relied, too much relied, upon that incapacity; otherwise they would never have ventured to make this grand move. The first who pronounced the name of the States-General,—the parliaments which demanded them,—the ministers who promised them,—Necker who convoked them,—all, believed the people incapable of taking any serious part therein. They only thought, by this solemn convocation of a great lifeless mass, to frighten the privileged classes. The court, which was itself the privilege of privileges, the abuse of abuses, had no desire to make war on them. It merely hoped, by the forced contributions of the clergy and nobility, to fill the public coffers, from which they filled their own.

And what did the queen desire? Given up to *parvenus*,

* This expression is not ill-employed. Feudality was very oppressive in 1789, more fiscal than ever, being entirely in the hands of intendants, attorneys, &c. Names and forms had changed,—nothing more.

hampered by the nobility, gradually despised, and alone, she wanted to have a slight revenge on those revilers, to intimidate them, and oblige them to rally round the king. She saw her brother Joseph attempting, in the Netherlands, to oppose the smaller towns to the larger, to the prelates and grandees.* That example, doubtless, rendered her less adverse to Necker's ideas; she consented to give to the *Tiers* (or Third Estate) as many deputies as the nobility and clergy had together.

And what did Necker desire? Two things at once,—to pretend much and do little.

For ostentation, for glory,—to be celebrated and extolled by the saloons and the immense body of the public, it was necessary to double generously the number of the deputies of the Third Estate.

In reality, they wanted to be generous at a cheap rate.† The Third Estate, more or less numerous, would never be anything but one of three orders,—would have but one vote against two; Necker reckoned surely on maintaining the voting by orders, which had so often before paralysed the ancient States-General. The Third Estate, moreover, had at all times been very modest, very respectful, too well-bred to wish to be represented by men of its own class. It had often named nobles for deputies, mostly newly-created nobles, parliament people and others, who prided themselves on voting with the

* See, for the revolution in Brabant, so different from ours, the documents collected by Gachard (1834), Gerard (1842), and the histories by Gross-Hoffinger (1837), Borgnet (1844), and Ramshorn (1845). That revolution of *abbés*, of which the Capuchin-friars were the terrorists, deceived everybody here (in France), both the court and our Jacobins. Dumouriez alone comprehended, and said, that it was primitively the work of the powerful *abbés* of the Netherlands. M. Mercy d'Argenteau, the Austrian ambassador, believed at first, and doubtless made Marie-Antoinette believe, that in France, as in Belgium, the peril was on the side of the aristocracy. Hence, many false steps.

† For all this, one must see Necker's curious confessions, his pleading for the Third Estate. (*Œuvres*, vi., 419, 443, &c.) Therein, as in all his works, one always perceives the foreigner anything but esteemed in France, a clerk ever clerk-like, who stands bowing before the nobility,—a Protestant who wants to find grace with the clergy. To reassure the privileged classes about the poor Third Estate, he presents it to them feeble, timid, and subservient; he seems to be telegraphing secretly with them. He, moreover, gives them to understand that his client is an easy sort of person,—easily duped.

nobility, against the interests of the Third Estate which had named them.

A strange circumstance, but a proof that they had no real intention,—that they merely wanted by this grand phantasmagoria, to overcome the selfishness of the privileged classes, and open their purses, is, that in these States, called against them, they managed nevertheless to secure them a predominant influence.* The popular assemblies were to elect by acclamation (*à haute voix*). They did not suppose that inferior people, in such a mode of election, in presence of the nobles and notables, would possess sufficient firmness to oppose them,—enough assurance to pronounce other names than those which were dictated to them.

In calling the people of the country, of the villages, to the election, Necker, no doubt, expected to do something very political; in proportion as the democratical spirit was aroused in the towns, in such proportion the country-places were influenced by the nobles and the clergy,—the possessors of two thirds of the lands. Millions of men arrived thus at election, who were dependent on the privileged classes, as tenants, cultivators, &c., or who indirectly would be influenced, or intimidated, by their agents, stewards, attorneys, and men of business. Necker knew, from the experience of Switzerland and the history of the petty cantons, that universal suffrage may be, with certain conditions, the stay of the aristocracy. The notables whom he consulted, so completely adopted this idea, that they wanted to make even their servants electors. Necker would not consent to it, as then the election would have fallen entirely into the hands of the large proprietors.

The result deceived all their calculations.† This people, though wholly unprepared, showed a very sure instinct. When they were called to election and informed of their rights, it was

* The privileged orders were doubly favoured: 1st. They were not subjected to the two degrees of election; they elected their deputies in a direct manner. 2dly. The nobles were *all* electors, and not *the nobles who had fiefs* exclusively, as in the ancient states; the privilege was the more odious still, as being extended to a whole generation of nobles; the pretensions were the more ridiculous.

† Very uncertain calculations. The king confesses, in the convocation of Paris, that he does not know the number of the inhabitants of the best-known town in the kingdom, that he cannot guess the number of the electors, &c.

found that little remained to be taught them. In that prodigious movement of five or six millions of men, there was some sort of hesitation, through their ignorance of forms, and especially, because the majority knew not how to read. But they knew how to speak ; they knew how, in presence of their lords, without infringing upon their respectful habits, or laying aside their humble demeanour, to select worthy electors, who all nominated safe and certain deputies.

The admission of the country districts to election had the unexpected result of placing even among the deputies of the privileged orders a numerous democracy, of whom they had never thought, two hundred *curés* and more, very hostile to their bishops. In Brittany, and in the South, the peasant willingly nominated his *curé*, who, moreover, alone knowing how to write, received the votes, and directed all the election.*

The people of the towns, rather better prepared, having been somewhat enlightened by the philosophy of the age, evinced an admirable eagerness, a lively consciousness of their rights. This appeared plain at the elections, by the rapidity, the certainty with which crowds of inexperienced men took this their first political step. It appeared evident in the uniformity of the memorials (*cahiers*) in which they recorded their complaints,—an unexpected, powerful combination, which imparted irresistible strength to the will of the people. How long had those complaints existed in every heart ! It was but too easy to write them. Many a memorial of our districts, containing almost a code, was begun at midnight, and finished at three in the morning.†

A movement so vast, so varied, so wholly unprepared, and yet so unanimous, is most wonderful ! All took part in it, and (except an insignificant number) they all desired the same thing.‡

Unanimous ! There was a complete and unreserved concord, a perfectly simple state of things,—the nation on one side and privilege on the other. Yet, there was no possible

* However, in several *communes*, sworn scribes were appointed to write down the votes.—Duchatellier, *La Revolution en Bretagne*, i., 281.

† *Mémoires de Bailly*, i., 12.

‡ The same thing in every essential point. To which every corporation and every town added something special.

distinction then in the nation between the people and the citizens ;* only one distinction appeared,—the instructed and the ignorant ; the educated alone spoke and wrote ; but they wrote the thoughts of all. They drew up into a formula the general demands ; and they were the demands of the mute masses as much as, and more than their own.

Oh ! who would not be touched by the remembrance of that unrivalled moment, when we started into life ? It was short-lived ; but it remains for us the ideal whereunto we shall ever tend, the hope of the future ! O sublime Concord, in which the rising liberties of classes, subsequently in opposition, embraced so tenderly, like brothers in the cradle,—shall we never more see thee return upon our earth ?

This union of the different classes, this grand appearance of the people in their formidable unity, struck terror to the court which used every effort with the king to prevail on him to break his word. The Polignac faction had contrived, in order to place him in an uncomfortable position, to get the princes to write and sign an audacious letter in which they menaced the king, assumed to be the chiefs of the privileged classes, spoke of refusing taxes, of divisions, almost of civil war.

And yet, how could the king elude the States ? Recommended by the Court of Aides, demanded by the Parliaments, and by the Notables, promised by Brienne, and again by Necker, they were at length to open on the 27th of April. They were further prorogued till the 4th of May. A perilous delay ! To so many voices then arising another was added, alas ! one often heard in the eighteenth century,—*the voice of the earth*—the desolate, sterile earth refusing food to man ! The winter had been terrible ; the summer was dry and gave nothing : and famine began. The bakers being uneasy, and always in peril before the starving riotous crowd, themselves denounced companies who were monopolising the corn. Only one thing restrained the people, and made them fast patiently and wait,—their hope in the States-General. A vague hope ; but it

* It was a vital error of the authors of the *Histoire Parlementaire*, to mark this distinction at that important moment when nobody saw it. It will come but too soon ; we must wait. Thus to be blind to the real consequence of facts, and to drag them forcibly forward before their time by a sort of systematic pre-arrangement, is precisely contrary to history.

supported them ; the forthcoming assembly was a Messiah ; it had only to *speak*, and the stones were to change into bread.

The elections, so long delayed, were still longer postponed at Paris. They were not convoked till the eve of the assembling of the States. It was hoped that the deputies would not be present at the first sittings, and that before their arrival, they would secure the separation of the three orders, which gave a majority to the privileged.

There was another cause for discontent, and one most serious for Paris. In that city, the most enlightened in the kingdom, election was subjected to more severe conditions. A special regulation, made after the convocation, called, as primary electors, not all who were taxed, but those only who paid a rate of six francs.

Paris was filled with troops, every street with patrols, and every place of election surrounded with soldiers. Arms were loaded in the street, in face of the crowd.

In presence of these vain demonstrations, the electors were very firm. Scarcely had they met, when they rejected the presidents given to them by the king. Out of sixty districts, three only re-appointed the president named by the monarch, making him declare that he presided by election. A serious measure,—the first act of the national sovereignty. And it was indeed that which it was necessary to acquire,—it was Right that it was necessary to found. Questions of finance and reform would come afterwards. Without Right, what guarantee was there, or what serious reform ?

The electors, created by these district assemblies, acted in precisely the same manner. They elected as president the advocate Target ; Camus, the advocate of the clergy, as vice-president, and the academician Bailly and Doctor Guillotin, a philanthropical physician, as secretaries.*

The court was astonished at the decision, firmness, and re-

* This assembly, so firm in its first proceedings, was nevertheless composed of notables, functionaries, merchants, or advocates. The latter led the assembly ; they were Camus, Target, Treilhard, the advocate of the *Ferme Générale*, Lacretelle Senior, and Desèze. In the second rank came the academicians,—Bailly, Thouin, and Cadet, Gaillard, Suard, Marmontel. Next, the bankers, such as Lecouteulx, and the printers, librarians, and stationers, Pankoucke, Baudouin, Réveillon, &c.

gularity, with which twenty-five thousand primary electors, so new to political life, then proceeded. There was no disturbance. Assembled in the churches, they transferred thither the emotion of the great and holy task they were accomplishing. The boldest measure, the destitution of the presidents named by the king, was effected without any noise or exclamation, with the forcible simplicity imparted by a consciousness of right.

The electors, under a president of their choice, were sitting at the Archbishop's Palace, and about to make a total of the district polls, and to draw up one common resolution; they were already agreed on one point, which Sieyes had recommended,—the utility of prefacing with a declaration of the rights of man. In the middle of this delicate and difficult metaphysical task, they were interrupted by a terrible uproar. A ragged multitude had come to demand the head of one of their colleagues, of Réveillon, an elector,—a paper-manufacturer in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Réveillon was concealed; but the riot was not less dangerous on that account. It was now the 28th of April; the States-General, promised for the 27th, and then postponed again till the 4th of May, ran a great risk, if the riots lasted, of being adjourned once more.

The riot broke out precisely on the 27th, and it was but too easy to spread, entertain, and increase it, among a starving population. A report had been spread in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, that Réveillon, the paper-manufacturer,—a workman grown rich,—had said unfeelingly that it was necessary to lower wages to fifteen sous a day; and, it was added, that he was to receive the decoration of the *cordón-noir*. That report was followed by a great commotion. First, a band, in front of Réveillon's door, take his effigy, decorated with the *cordón*, carry it in procession to La Grève, and burn it with much ceremony beneath the windows of the Hôtel-de-Ville, before the eyes of the municipal authority, who remain perfectly unmoved. This authority and the others, so vigilant just before, seemed fast asleep. The lieutenant of police, the prévost Flesselles, and Berthier the intendant,—all those court-agents, who lately surrounded the elections with soldiers, had lost their activity.

The band exclaimed aloud that it would go, on the morrow, to do justice at Réveillon's. It kept its word. The police, though so well warned, used no precaution. The colonel of the

French Guards sends, of his own accord, some thirty men,—a ridiculous force ; in a compact crowd of a thousand or two thousand pillagers and a hundred thousand idle spectators, the soldiers will not, cannot, act. The house is broken open, and everything demolished, shattered to pieces, and burnt. Nothing was carried away, except five hundred *louis d'or*.* Many took up their quarters in the cellars, drank the wine, and the colours of the manufactory, mistaking them for wine.

What seems incredible is, that this shameful scene lasted all day. It took place too at the very entrance of the faubourg, under the cannon of the Bastille, at the gate of the fort. Réveillon, who was concealed there, saw all from the towers.

A few companies of the French Guards were sent from time to time, who fired, first with powder, and next with ball. The pillagers paid no attention to them, though they had only stones to throw in return. Late, very late, the commandant, Besenval, sent some Swiss ; the pillagers still resisted, and killed a few men ; the soldiers replied by some destructive discharges, which left a number of dead and wounded on the pavement. Many of these bodies in rags had money about them.

If, during those two long days, when the magistrates were asleep and Besenval abstained from sending troops, the faubourg Saint-Antoine had allowed itself to be seduced to follow the band that was sacking Réveillon's house,—if fifty thousand workmen, without either work or bread, had, on that example, set about pillaging the rich mansions, everything would have changed its aspect ; the court would then have an excellent

* According to the statement of Réveillon himself: *Exposé justificatif*, p. 422, (printed at the end of Ferrières). The *Histoire Parlementaire* is again inexact here. It makes of all this, without the least proof, a war of the people against the citizens. It exaggerates the extent of the riot, the number of the dead, &c. Bailly, on the contrary, and no less wrongfully, in p. 28 of his *Memoirs*, reduces it to nothing: "Nobody perished, as far as I know." A very important testimony, on the Réveillon riot, is that of the illustrious surgeon Desault, who received several of the wounded at the Hôtel-Dieu: "*Ils n'avaient l'air que du crime foudroyé ; au contraire, les blessés de la Bastille,*" &c.: See *l'Œuvre des sept Jours*, p. 411. What showed plainly that the people did not consider the pillage of Réveillon's house as a patriotic act is, that they were near hanging, on the 16th of July, a man whom they mistook for the abbé Roy, *accused of having excited this riot* (Bailly, ii., p. 51), and of having subsequently offered to the court a means of slaughtering Paris.—(*Procès-verbal des Electeurs*, ii., p. 46.)

motive to concentrate an army on Paris and Versailles, and a specious pretext for adjourning the States. But the great mass of the faubourg remained honest, and abstained; it looked on, without moving. The riot, thus confined to a few hundred people, drunkards and thieves, became a disgrace to the authority that permitted it. Besenval at length found his part too ridiculous; he acted, and terminated all very roughly. The court did not thank him for it; it durst not blame him, but it did not say one word to him.*

The parliament could not, for its honour, dispense with opening an inquiry; but the inquiry stopped short. It has been said, without sufficient proof, that it was forbidden in the king's name to proceed.

Who were the instigators? Perhaps nobody. Fire, on those stormy occasions, may burst forth of its own accord. People did not fail to accuse "the revolutionary party." What was that party? As yet, there was no active association.

It was said that the Duke of Orleans had given money. Why? What did he then gain by it? The great movement then beginning offered to his ambition too many legal chances, for him, at that period, to need to have recourse to riots. True, he was led on by intriguing persons, ready for anything; but their plan at this period was entirely directed towards the States-General; they felt sure, from their duke being the only popular one among the princes, that he was about to take the lead. Every event that might delay the States, appeared to them a misfortune.

Who desired to delay them? Who found an advantage in terrifying the electors? Who derived a profit from riot?

The court alone, we must confess. The affair happened so exactly at the right time for it, that it might be believed to be the author. It is nevertheless more probable that it did not

* *Mémoires de Besenval*, ii., p. 347.—Madame de Genlis and other friends of the *ancien régime*, will have it, that these memoirs, so overwhelming against them, were drawn up by the Vicomte de Ségur. Let it be so: he must then have written from the notes and memory of Besenval. The memoirs do not the less belong to the latter. Besenval was, I know, but little able to write; but without his *confidences*, the amiable lampooner would never have made this book so strong, so historical under an aspect of levity; the truth bursts forth and shines there, often with a terrible light; nothing remains but to cast down our eyes.

begin it, but saw it with pleasure, did nothing to prevent it, and regretted it was so soon over. The faubourg Saint-Antoine had not then its terrible reputation ; a riot under the very cannon of the Bastille did not seem dangerous.

The nobles of Brittany had given an example of troubling the legal operations of the provincial States, by exciting the peasants, and pitting against the people a populace mingled with lackeys. Even at Paris, a newspaper, the *Ami du Roi*, a few days before the Réveillon affair, seemed to be attempting the same manœuvre :—" What matter these elections ?" said this journal, in a hypocritical tone, " the poor will ever be poor ; the lot of the most interesting portion of the kingdom is forgotten," &c. As if the first results of the Revolution which these elections were beginning,—the suppression of tithes and that of the *octroi* duties, and the *aides*, and the sale, at a low price, of half the lands in the kingdom, had not produced the most sudden amelioration in the condition of the poor that any people had ever witnessed !

On the morning of the 29th, all had become quiet again. The assembly of the electors were able peaceably to resume their labours. They lasted till the 20th of May ; and the court obtained the advantage that it had proposed to itself by this tardy convocation,—the preventing the deputation of Paris from being present at the first sittings of the States-General. The last person elected by Paris, and by France, was he who, in public opinion, was the first of all, he who had traced beforehand for the Revolution so straight and simple a path, and had marked its first steps, one by one. Everything was marching forward, according to the plan given by Sieyes with a motion majestic, pacific, and firm, like the Law. Law alone was about to reign ; after so many ages of despotism and caprice, the time was arriving when nobody would be right against Right.

Let, then, those dreaded States-General at length assemble and open. They who convoked them, and now would wish they had never spoken of them, cannot alter the matter. It is a rising ocean : causes infinite and profound, acting from the depths of ages, agitate the boiling mass. Bring against it, I pray you, all the armies in the world, or an infant's finger ; it makes no difference. God is urging it forward ; tardy justice, the expiation of the past, the salvation of the future !

CHAPTER II.

OPENING OF THE STATES-GENERAL.

Procession of the States-General.—Opening on the 5th of May.—Necker's Speech.—Question about the Separation of the Orders.—The Third Estate invites the others to unite.—Inaction of the Assembly.—Snares laid for it.—(4th of May to 9th of June, 1789.)

ON the eve of the opening of the States-General, the Mass of the Holy Ghost was solemnly said at Versailles. It was certainly that day or never, that they might sing the prophetic hymn :—"Thou wilt create peoples, and the face of the earth shall be renewed."

That grand day was the 4th of May. The twelve hundred deputies, the king, the queen, the whole court, heard the *Veni Creator* at the Church of Notre-Dame. Next, the immense procession, passing through the whole town, repaired to Saint-Louis. The broad streets of Versailles, lined with French guards and Swiss, and hung with the crown tapestry, could not contain the crowd. All Paris was there. The windows, the very roofs, were loaded with people. The balconies were adorned with precious stuffs, and ornamented with brilliant women, in the coquettish and whimsical costume of that period, diversified with feathers and flowers. All that mass of beings was moved, affected, full of anxiety and hope.* Something grand was beginning. What would be its progress, issue, and results? who could tell? The splendour of such a sight, so varied and majestic, and the music which was heard at different intervals, silenced every other thought.

A grand day,—the last of peace, yet the first of an immense future!

The passions were doubtless strong, diverse, and opposite, but not embittered, as they soon became. Even they who had the least desired this new era, could not help sharing the common emotion. A deputy of the nobility confesses that he wept

* See the eye-witnesses, Ferrières, Staël, &c.

for joy : “ I saw France, my native land, reclining on Religion, saying to us : ‘ Stifle your quarrels.’ Tears flowed from my eyes. My God, my country, my fellow-citizens, had become myself.”

At the head of the procession appeared first a mass of men clothed in black,—the strong, deep battalion of the five hundred and fifty deputies of the Third Estate ; in that number, more than three hundred jurists, advocates, or magistrates, represented forcibly the advent of the law. Modest in their dress, firm in their look and deportment, they marched forward still united, without any distinction of party, all happy on that grand day, which they had made and which was their victory.

The brilliant little troop of the deputies of the nobility came next with their plumed hats, their laces, and gold ornaments. The applause that had welcomed the Third Estate suddenly ceased. Among those nobles, however, about forty seemed as warm friends of the people as the men of the Third-Estate.

The same silence for the clergy. In this order, two orders were distinctly perceptible : a Nobility and a Third Estate : some thirty prelates in lawn sleeves and violet robes ; and apart, and separated from them by a choir of musicians, the humble troop of the two hundred *curés*, in their black, priestly robes.

On beholding that imposing mass of twelve hundred men animated with noble passion, an attentive spectator would have been struck with one thing in particular. They presented very few strongly-delineated individualities ; doubtless many men both honourable and of highly prized talents, but none of those who, by the united authority of genius and character, have the right to transport the multitude,—no great inventor,—no hero. The powerful innovators who had opened the way for that century, then existed no more. Their thought alone remained to guide nations. Great orators arose to express and apply that thought ; but they did not add to it. The glory of the Revolution in her earlier moments,—but her peril also,—which might render her less certain in her progress, was to go without men, to go alone, by the transport of ideas, on the faith of pure reason, without idols and false gods.

The body of the nobility, which presented itself as the depository and guardian of our military glory, showed not one

celebrated general. "Obscure men of illustrious origin were all those grand lords of France." One alone perhaps excited some interest, he who, in spite of the court, had been the first to take a part in the American war,—the young and fair Lafayette. Nobody then suspected the prominent part which fortune was about to thrust upon him. The Third Estate, in its obscure mass, already contained the Convention. But who could have seen it? Who recognised, among that crowd of advocates, the stiff form and pale face of a certain lawyer of Arras?

Two things were noticed: the absence of Sieyes, and the presence of Mirabeau.

Sieyes had not yet come: in that grand movement, people looked for him whose singular sagacity had seen, regulated, calculated, and directed it beforehand.

Mirabeau was present, and attracted everybody's attention. His immense mass of hair, his lion-like head, stamped with extreme ugliness, were astounding, almost frightful; nobody could take his eyes off him. He indeed was visibly a man, and the others were but shadows,—a man, unfortunately, of his time and class, vicious, like the higher society of the day, moreover scandalous, noisy, and courageous in vice: that is what ruined him. The world was full of the romance of his adventures, amours, and passions. For he had had passions, violent, furious ones. Who then had such? And the tyranny of those passions, so exacting and absorbing, had often led him very low. Poor by the harsh treatment of his family, he suffered moral misery, the vices of the poor besides those of the rich. Family tyranny, state tyranny, moral, internal tyranny,—that of passion. Ah! nobody could hail more fervently that aurora of liberty. He did not despair of there finding liberty, the regeneration of the soul; he used to say so to his friends.* He was about to grow young with France, and throw aside his old stained cloak. Only, it was necessary to live longer; on the threshold of this new life opening before him, though strong, ardent, and impassioned, he had nevertheless seriously injured his constitution; his complexion was altered, and his cheeks had fallen. No matter! He still bore his enormous

* Et Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 27.

head erect, and his looks were full of audacity. Everybody seemed to forebode in him the loud appalling voice of France.

The Third Estate was in general applauded ; next, among the nobility, the Duke of Orleans alone ; and lastly the King, whom they thanked for having convoked the States. Such was the justice of the people.

On the passage of the Queen, there were a few murmurs ; a few women shouted : “ *Vive le duc d’Orleans !* ” thinking to pique her the more by naming her enemy. This made a great impression upon her ; she was nearly fainting, and they had to support her ; * but she recovered very soon, carrying erect her haughty and still handsome countenance. She attempted from that moment to meet the public hatred with a stedfast, disdainful stare. A sad effort, which did not heighten her beauty. In her solemn portrait which was left us in 1788, by her painter, Madame Lebrun, who loved her, and must have adored her with her very affection, we perceive nevertheless something already repulsive, disdainful, and hardened. †

Thus this grand festival of peace and union, showed symptoms of war. It pointed out a day for France to unite and embrace in one common thought, and at the same time went the very way to divide it.. On merely beholding that diversity of costumes imposed on the deputies, one found the harsh but true expression of Sieyes at once realised : “ Three orders ? no : three nations ! ”

The court had hunted into old books, to find out the odious details of a gothic ceremonial, those oppositions of classes, those signs of social distinctions and hatred which it should rather have buried in oblivion. Blazonry, figures, and symbols, after Voltaire, after Figaro ! It was late. To tell the truth, it was not so much the mania for old costumes that had guided the court, as the secret pleasure of mortifying and lowering those petty people who, at the elections, had been

* Campan, ii., p. 37.

† Compare the three portraits at Versailles. In the first (in white satin) she is a coquette, still pleasing ; she feels she is loved. In the second (in red velvet and furs) surrounded by her children ; her daughter is leaning gently upon her ; but all in vain ; the want of feeling is incurable ; her look is fixed, dull, and singularly harsh (1787). In the third (in blue velvet, 1788), alone, with a book in her hand, quite a queen, but melancholy and unfeeling.

acting the part of kings, and to remind them of their low origin. Weakness was playing at the dangerous game of humiliating the strong for the last time.

As early as the 3rd of May, on the eve of the Mass of the Holy Ghost, the deputies being presented at Versailles, the king, at that moment of cordiality and easy emotion, chilled the deputies, who had almost all arrived favourably disposed towards him. Instead of receiving them mingled together by provinces, he made them enter by orders: the clergy, the nobility first—then, after a pause, the Third Estate.

They would willingly have imputed such petty insolence to the officers and valets; but Louis XVI. showed but too plainly that he himself was tenacious of the old ceremonial. At the sitting on the 5th, the king having covered himself, and the nobility after him, the Third Estate wished to do the same; but the king, to prevent it from thus assuming an equality with the nobility, preferred to uncover himself.

Who would believe that this mad court remembered and regretted the absurd custom of making the Third Estate harangue on their knees. They were unwilling to dispense from this ceremony expressly, and preferred deciding that the president of the Third should make no speech whatever. That is to say, that, at the end of two hundred years of separation and silence, the king dismissed his people and forbade them to speak.

On the 5th of May, the Assembly opened, not in the king's palace, but in the Paris avenue, in the *Salle des Menus*. That hall, which unfortunately no longer exists, was immense; it was able to contain, besides the twelve hundred deputies, four thousand auditors.

An ocular witness, Madame de Staël, Necker's daughter, who had gone thither to behold her father applauded, tells us accordingly that he was so, and that on Mirabeau taking his place, a few murmurs were heard. Murmurs against the immoral man? That brilliant society, dying of its vices, and present at its last festival, had no right to be severe.*

* "When the king went and placed himself upon the throne, in the middle of that assembly, I experienced, for the first time, a feeling of dread. First, I noticed that the queen was much moved; she arrived later than the hour appointed, and the colour of her complexion was altered."—Staël, *Considerations*, i., ch. xvi.

The Assembly had to suffer three speeches,—the king's, that of the keeper of the seals, and Necker's, all on the same text, and all unworthy of the occasion. The king at length found himself in presence of the nation, and he had no paternal speech to utter, not one word from his heart for their hearts. The exordium was an awkward, timid, sullen grumbling about the spirit of innovation. He expressed his sensibility for the two superior orders, "who showed themselves disposed to renounce their pecuniary privileges." A pre-occupation of money prevailed throughout the three discourses; little or nothing on the question of right, that which filled and exalted every soul, the right of equality. The king and his two ministers, in awkward phrase, in which bombastic style contends alternately with baseness, seem convinced that the matter in question is merely one of taxation, of money, subsistence,—a question of feeding. They believe that if the privileged classes grant, as alms, to the Third Estate an equality of taxation, everything will be amicably settled at once.* Hence, three eulogiums, in the three speeches, on the sacrifice of the superior orders, who are so kind as to forego their exemption. These eulogiums go on even *crescendo* up to Necker, who sees no heroism in history comparable to it.

These eulogiums, which look rather like an invitation, announce too clearly that this admirable and extolled sacrifice is not yet made. Let it be made then, and quickly! This is the whole question for the king and the ministers, who have called the Third Estate there as a bugbear, and would willingly send it away. They have as yet but partial, dubious assurances of that great sacrifice: a few lords have offered it, but they have been laughed at by the others. Several members of the clergy, contrary to the known opinion of the Assembly of the clergy, have given the same hope. The two orders are in no great haste to explain themselves in this matter; the decisive word cannot leave their lips; it sticks in their throat. It requires two months, and the most serious and terrible cir-

* First, to speak only of money, what was called the *impôt* was but a very small portion of the total impost, of what was paid under different names to the clergy and nobility, as tithes or feudal tributes. And then again, money was not all. For the people, the question was not to pick up a few sous flung to them, but indeed to assume their rights: nothing more and nothing less.

cumstances,—the victory of the Third Estate,—for the clergy, on the 26th of June, at length subdued, to renounce, and even then the nobility to *promise* only to do the same.

Necker spoke for three hours on finance and morality: “There is nothing,” said he, “without public morality and private morality.” His speech was not the less on that account an immoral enumeration of the means possessed by the king to do without the States-General, and continue despotism. The States, from that moment, were a pure gift, a granted and revocable favour.

He avowed imprudently that the king was *uneasy*. He expressed the desire that the two superior orders, remaining alone and free, should accomplish their sacrifices, with the exception that they might unite with the Third Estate in order subsequently to discuss questions of common interest. A dangerous insinuation! The minister being once free to derive the taxes from those rich sources of large property, would not have insisted much on obtaining the union of the orders. The privileged classes would have preserved their false majority; and two orders leagued against one would have prevented every reform. What matter! The bankruptcy being avoided, the scarcity having ceased, and public opinion slumbering again, the question of right of security was adjourned, and inequality and despotism strengthened; Necker reigned, or rather the court, who, once safe from the danger, would have sent the sentimental banker back to Geneva.

On the 6th of May, the deputies of the Third Estate took possession of the large hall, and the impatient crowd, that had been besieging the doors, rushed in after them.

The nobility apart, and the clergy apart, take up their quarters in their chambers, and, without losing time, decide that the powers ought to be verified by each order and in its own circle. The majority was great among the nobility, and small among the clergy; a great many curates wanted to join the Third Estate. The Third, strong in its great number, and master of the large hall, declares that *it is waiting for the two other orders*. The emptiness of that immense hall seemed to accuse their absence: the very hall spoke.

The question of the union of the orders contained every other. That of the Third, already double in number, was

likely to gain the votes of some fifty nobles and a hundred curates, thereby commanding the two orders with an immense majority, and becoming their judges in everything. Privilege judged by those against whom it was established! It was easy to foresee the sentence.

So, the Third waited for the clergy and the nobility; it awaited in its strength, and patiently, like everything immortal. The privileged were agitated; they turned round, when too late, towards the source of privilege, the king, their natural centre, which they themselves had disturbed. Thus, in that time of expectation, which lasted a month or more, things became classed according to their affinity: the privileged with the king,—the Assembly with the people.

It lived with them, spoke with them, all the doors being wide open; and as yet no barriers. Paris was sitting at Versailles, pell-mell with the deputies. A continual communication existed all along the road. The assembly of the electors of Paris, and the irregular tumultuous assembly held by the crowd in the Palais-Royal, were asking every moment for news of the deputies; they questioned with avidity who ever came from Versailles. The Third, that saw the court becoming more and more irritated, and surrounding itself with soldiers, felt it had but one defence, the crowd that was listening to it, and the press, which caused it to be listened to by the whole kingdom. The very day of the opening of the States, the court endeavoured to stifle the press; a decree of the Council suppressed and condemned the journal of the States-General, published by Mirabeau; another decree forbade the publication of any periodical without permission. Thus was censorship, which for several months had remained inactive and as if suspended, re-established in face of the assembled nation,—re-established for the necessary and indispensable communications of the deputies and those who had deputed them. Mirabeau paid but little attention to this, and went on publishing under this title: *Letters to my Constituents*. The assembly of the electors of Paris, still working at their written resolutions (*cahiers*) left off (on the 7th of May), to protest unanimously against the decree of the Council.* This

* *Procès-verbal des électeurs, rédigé par Bailly et Duveyrier*, i., 34.

was the first time Paris interfered in general affairs. The great and capital question of the liberty of the press was thus carried in a trice. The court might now bring together its cannon and its armies ; a more powerful artillery, that of the press, was henceforth thundering in the ears of the people ; and all the kingdom heard it.

On the 7th of May, the Third, on the proposal of Malouet and Mounier, permitted some of its members to invite the clergy and the nobility to come and take their seats. The nobility went on and formed themselves into an assembly. The clergy, more divided and more timorous, wanted to see what course things would take ; the prelates, moreover, believing that, in time, they should gain votes among the curates.

Six days lost. On the 12th of May, Rabaud de Saint-Etienne, a Protestant deputy from Nîmes, and the son of the old Martyr of Cévennes, proposed a conference to bring about the union. To which the Breton Chapelier wished to have substituted "a *notification* of the astonishment of the Third-Estate at the absence of the other orders, of the impossibility of conferring elsewhere than in a common union, and of the interest and right that every deputy had to judge of the validity of the title of all ; the States being once opened, there is no longer any deputy of order or province, but representatives of the nation ; the deputies of privilege gain by it, their functions being aggrandized."

Rabaut's motion was carried, as being the more moderate. Conferences took place ; but they only served to embitter things. On the 27th of May, Mirabeau reproduced a motion that he had already brought forward, to attempt to detach the clergy from the nobility, and invite them to the union "in the name of the God of peace." The motion was one of good policy ; a number of *curés* were waiting impatiently for an opportunity to unite. This new invitation nearly carried away the whole order. With great difficulty, the prelates obtained a delay. In the evening, they ran to the castle, to the Polignac party. By means of the queen,* they got from the king a letter in

* Droz, ii., 189.—The testimony of M. Droz has often the weight of a contemporary authority ; he frequently transmits to us the verbal information and revelation of Malouet and other important actors of the Revolution.

which he declared "that he desired that the conferences might be resumed in presence of the keeper of the seals and a royal commission." The king thus impeded the union of the clergy with the Third, and made himself visibly the agent of the privileged classes.

This letter was a snare unworthy of royalty. If the Third Estate accepted, the king, arbiter of the conferences, could quash the question by a decree of the council, and the orders remained divided. If the Third alone refused and the other orders accepted, it bore alone the odium of the common inaction; it alone, at that moment of misery and famine, would not take one step to succour the nation. Mirabeau, in pointing out the snare, advised the assembly to appear duped, to accept the conferences, whilst protesting by an address.

Another snare. In these conferences, Necker made an appeal to sentiment, generosity, and confidence. He advised that each order should intrust the validity of its elective returns to the others; and, in case of difference of opinion, *the king should judge*. The clergy accepted without hesitation. If the nobility had accepted, the Third remained alone against two. Who drew it out of this danger? The nobility themselves, mad, and running headlong to their ruin. The Polignac committee would not accept an expedient proposed by their enemy, Necker. Even before reading the king's letter, the nobility had decided in order to bar every chance of conciliation, that deliberation by orders and the *veto* of each order on the decisions of the others, were constituent principles of the monarchy. Necker's plan tempted many moderate nobles; two new nobles of great talent, only violent and weak-headed, Cazalès and d'Eprémèsnil, embroiled the question and contrived to elude this last means of salvation,—to reject the plank which the king presented to them in their shipwreck (June 6th).

A month lost, after the delay of the three adjournments which the convocation had suffered! One month, in open famine! Observe, that in this long expectation, the rich kept themselves motionless, and postponed every kind of expenditure. Work had ceased. He who had but his hands, his daily labour, to supply the day, went to look for work, found none, begged, got nothing, robbed. Starving gangs overran the country; wherever they found any resistance, they became furious,

killed, and burned. Horror spread far and near ; communications ceased, and famine went on increasing. A thousand absurd stories were in circulation. They were said to be brigands paid by the court. And the court flung back the accusation on the Duke of Orleans.

The position of the Assembly was difficult. It was obliged to sit inactive, when every remedy that could be hoped for was in action. It was obliged to shut its ears, in a manner, to the painful cry of France, in order to save France herself, and found her liberty !

The clergy aggravated that cruel position, and contrived a truly Phariseean invention against the Third Estate. A prelate came into the Assembly, to weep over the poor people and the misery of the rural districts. Before the four thousand persons present at that meeting, he drew from his pocket a hideous lump of black bread : " Such," said he, " is the bread of the peasant." The clergy proposed to act, to form a commission to confer together on the question of food and the misery of the poor. A dangerous snare. Either the Assembly yielded, became active, and thus consecrated the separation of the orders, or else it declared itself insensible to public misfortunes. The responsibility of the disorder which was everywhere beginning, fell on it at once. The usual orators however remained silent on this compromising question. But some obscure deputies, MM. Populus and Robespierre,* expressed forcibly and with talent the general sentiment. They invited the clergy to come into the *common hall* to deliberate on these public calamities by which the Assembly was no less touched than they.

This answer did not lessen the danger. How easy was it henceforth for the court, the nobles, and the priests, to turn the people ? What a fine text was a proud, ambitious assembly of advocates, that had promised to save France, and let her die of misery, rather than give up any of their unjust pretensions !

The court seized this weapon with avidity, and expected to

* Robespierre retorted happily. He said, very cleverly : " The ancient canons authorise, for the relief of the poor, to sell even the sacred vases." The *Moniteur*, incomplete and inexact, as it so often is, needs to be completed here by Etienne Dumont.—*Souvenirs*, p. 60.

destroy the Assembly. The king said to the president of the clergy, who came to submit to him the charitable proposal of his order on the question of food : " That he should see with pleasure a commission formed of the States-General that could assist him with its counsels."

Thus, the clergy were thinking of the people, and so was the king ; nothing prevented the nobility from uttering the same words. And then, the Third would be quite alone. It was about to be stated, that everybody desired the welfare of the people except the Third Estate.

CHAPTER III.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Last Summons of the Third on the 10th of June.—It assumes the name of *Communes*.—The *Communes* take the Title of *National Assembly* on the 17th of June.—They Assume the right of Taxation.—The King orders the Hall to be shut up.—The Assembly at the Tennis-Court (*Jeu de Paume*), June 20th, 1789.

ON the 10th of June, Sieyes said, on entering the Assembly : " Let us cut the cable ; it is time." Since that day, the vessel of the Revolution, in spite of storms and calms, delayed, but never stopped, sails onwards to the future.

That great theorician, who had beforehand calculated so exactly, showed himself here truly a statesman ; he had said what ought to be done, and he did it at the right moment.

Everything has its right moment. Here, it was the 10th of June, neither sooner nor later. Sooner, the nation was not sufficiently convinced of the hard-heartedness of the privileged classes ; it required a month for them to display clearly all their ill-will. Subsequently, two things were to be feared, either that the people, driven to extremity, might abandon their freedom for a bit of bread, and the privileged finish all, by renouncing their exemption from taxes ; or else, that the nobility, uniting with the clergy, might form (as they were advised) an upper chamber. Such a chamber, which, in our own days, has no part to play but that of being a machine convenient to royalty, would, in '89, have been a power by itself : it would

have assembled together those who then possessed the half or the two-thirds of the lands in the kingdom, those who, by their agents, tenants, and innumerable servants, had so many means of influencing the rural districts. The Netherlands had just given an example of the concord of those two orders, which had led away the people, driven out the Austrians, and dispossessed the emperor.

On Wednesday, the 10th of June, 1789, Sieyes proposed to summon the clergy and nobility for the last time, to warn them that the call would be made *in an hour*, and that *default would be the sentence* for non-appearance.

This summons in the judiciary form, was an unexpected blow. The deputies of the commons were taking, towards those who contested equality with them, a superior position, somewhat like that of judges.

This was wise; for there was too much risk in waiting; but it was also bold. It has often been said, that they who had a whole people behind them, and a city like Paris, had nothing to fear; that they were the stronger party, and advanced without any danger. After the event, and everything having succeeded, the thesis may be supported. Doubtless, they who took that step felt themselves very strong; but this strength was by no means organised; the people were not military as they became at a later period. An army surrounded Versailles, partly of Germans and Swiss (nine regiments at least out of fifteen); a battery of cannon was before the Assembly. The glory of the great logician who reduced the national mind to a formula, and the glory of the Assembly that accepted the formula, was to see nothing of that, but to believe in logic, and to advance in their faith.

The court, very irresolute, could do nothing but assume a disdainful silence. Twice the king avoided receiving the president of the commons; he was out hunting, so they said, or else, he was too much afflicted at the recent death of the Dauphin. But it was known that he received every day the prelates, nobles, and *parlementaires*. They were beginning to be alarmed, and now came to offer themselves to the king. The court listened to them and then bargained and speculated on their fears. However, it was evident that the king being besieged by them, and their prisoner to a certain degree, would

belong to them entirely, and show himself more and more what he was, a partisan of privilege at the head of the privileged classes. The situation of parties became clear and easy to be defined,—privilege on one side and right on the other.

The Assembly had spoken out. It expected its proceeding would cause it to be joined by a part of the clergy. The *curés* felt they were the people, and wished to go and take their true place by the side of the people. But habits of ecclesiastical subordination, the intrigues of the prelates, their authority and menaces, with the court and the queen, on the other hand, kept them still immovable on their benches. Only three ventured, then seven,—ten in all. Great was the merriment at court about this fine conquest made by the Third Estate.

The Assembly must either perish or go on and take a second step. It was necessary for it to look boldly on the plain but terrible situation to which we alluded just now,—right opposed to privilege—the right of the nation concentrated in the Assembly. Neither was it sufficient to see that; it was necessary to show it, cause it to be promulgated, and to give to the Assembly its true name: *The National Assembly*.

In his famous pamphlet, which everybody knew by heart, Sieyès had said these remarkable words, which did not fall to the ground: “The Third alone, they will say, cannot form the States-General.—Well! so much the better; it shall compose a *National Assembly*.”

To assume this title,—thus to entitle itself the nation, and realize the revolutionary dogma laid down by Sieyès—*The Third is everything*, was too bold a step to be taken all at once. It was necessary to prepare minds for it, and march towards that goal gradually and step by step.

At first the words *National Assembly* were not uttered in the Assembly itself but at Paris, among the electors who had elected Sieyès, and were not afraid to speak his language.

On the 15th of May, M. Boissy d'Anglas, then obscure and without influence, pronounced the words, but only to set them aside and adjourn them, warning the Chamber that it ought to be on its guard against every kind of precipitation, and remain free from the least reproach of *levity*. Before the movement began, he wanted already to efface the appellation.

The Assembly finally adopted the name of *Communes*, which,

in its humble and ill-defined signification, divested it however of the petty, inappropriate, and special name of *Third Estate*. The nobility strongly protested.

On the 15th of June, Sieyès, with boldness and prudence, demanded that the Commons should assume the title of *Assembly of the known and acknowledged representatives of the French nation*. It seemed to express only a fact impossible to be contested; the deputies of the Commons had subjected their powers to a public verification, made solemnly in the great open hall and before the crowd. The two other orders had verified among themselves with closed doors. The simple word, *acknowledged* deputies, reduced the others to the name of *presumed* deputies. Could the latter prevent the others from acting? Could the absent paralyse the *present*? Sieyès reminded them that the latter *represented already the ninety-six hundredths* (at least) *of the nation*.

They knew Sieyès too well not to suspect that this proposal was a step to lead to another, bolder and more decisive. Mirabeau reproached him from the very first, "with impelling the Assembly into the career, without showing it the goal to which he wanted to urge it."

And indeed, on the second day of the battle, the light burst forth. Two deputies served as precursors to Sieyès. M. Legrand proposed that the Assembly should constitute itself a *General Assembly*, and allow itself to be stopped by nothing that might be separate from the *indivisibility of a National Assembly*. M. Galand demanded that, as the clergy and nobility were simply two corporations, and the nation one and indivisible, the Assembly should constitute itself the legitimate and active Assembly of the *representatives of the French nation*. Sieyès then laid aside every obscurity and circumlocution, and proposed the title of *National Assembly*.

Since the sitting of the 10th, Mirabeau had seen Sieyès advancing under ground, and was frightened. That march led straight to a point, where it found itself face to face with royalty and the aristocracy. Would it halt out of respect for that worm-eaten idol? It did not appear likely. Now, in spite of the cruel discipline by which tyranny formed Mirabeau for liberty, we must say that the famous tribune was an aristocrat by taste and manners, and a royalist in heart; he was so

in fact by birth and blood. Two motives, one grand, and the other base, likewise impelled him. Surrounded by greedy women, he wanted money; and monarchy appeared to him with open lavish hands, squandering gold and favours. That royalty had been cruel and hard-hearted to him; but even that now interested him the more: he would have considered it noble to save a king who had so often signed the order for his imprisonment. Such was this poor great man, so magnanimous and generous, that one would wish to be able to attribute his vices to his deplorable acquaintances, and the paternal barbarity which excluded him from his family. His father persecuted him throughout his life, and yet he requested, with his dying breath, to be buried by his side.*

On the 10th, when Sieyes proposed to pronounce *default* for non-appearance, Mirabeau seconded that severe proposition, and spoke with firmness and energy. But, in the evening seeing the peril, he took upon himself to go and see his enemy, Necker;† he wished to enlighten him on the situation of things, and offer royalty the succour of his powerful oratory. Although ill-received and offended, he did not the less undertake to block up the road against Sieyes, and he, the tribune, raised but yesterday by the Revolution, and who had no power but in her, even he wanted to throw himself before her, and imagined he could stop her.

Any other would have perished at once, without ever being able to extricate himself. That he should have fallen more than once into unpopularity, and yet been able to regain his footing, is what gives a very grand idea of the power of eloquence upon this nation, sensitive beyond all others, to the genius of oratory.

What could be more difficult than Mirabeau's thesis? In presence of that excited and transported multitude, before a people exalted above themselves by the grandeur of the crisis, he endeavoured to establish "that the people were not interested in such discussions; that all they asked for was to pay only what they could, and to bear their misery peaceably."

After these base, afflicting, discouraging words, false more-

* *Mémoires de Mirabeau*, édité par M. Lucas de Montigny, t. viii., liv. x.

† Compare the different, but reconcilable, versions of E. Dumont and Broz, (who follow the oral testimony of Malouet).

over in terms, he ventured to put the question of principle: "Who convoked you? The king. Do your mandates and written resolutions authorize you to declare yourselves the Assembly only of the known and acknowledged representatives? and if the king refuses you his sanction? The consequence is evident. You will have pillage and butcheries: you will not have even the execrable honour of a civil war."

What title then was it necessary to take?

Mounier and the imitators of the English government proposed: Representatives of the *Major part* of the Nation, in the absence of the Minor part. That divided the nation into two parts, and led to the establishment of two Chambers.

Mirabeau preferred the formula: Representatives of the French *People*. That word, said he, was elastic,—might mean little or much.

This was precisely the reproach brought against him by two eminent legists, Target (of Paris), and Thouret (of Rouen). They asked him whether *people* meant *plebs* or *populus*. The equivocation was laid bare. The king, the clergy, and the nobility would doubtless have interpreted *people* in the sense of *plebs*, or inferior people,—a simple *part* of the nation.

Many had not perceived the equivocation, nor how much ground it would have caused the Assembly to lose. But they all understood it, when Malouet, Necker's friend, accepted the word *people*.

The fear which Mirabeau attempted to inspire with the royal veto, excited only indignation. Camus, the Jansenist, one of the firmest characters in the Assembly, replied in these strong terms: "We are what we are. Can the *veto* prevent truth from being one and immutable? Can the royal sanction change the order of things and alter their nature?"

Mirabeau, irritated by the contradiction, and losing all prudence, became so angry as to say: "I believe the king's *veto* so necessary, that I would rather live at Constantinople than in France if he had it not. Yes, I declare I know nothing more terrible than the sovereign aristocracy of six hundred persons, who might to-morrow render themselves irrevocable, hereditary the day after, and end, like the aristocracies of every country in the world, by invading everything."

Thus, of two evils, one possible, the other present, Mirabeau

preferred the one present and certain. In the hypothesis that this Assembly might one day wish to perpetuate itself and become an hereditary tyrant, he armed, with the tyrannical power of preventing every reform, that incorrigible court which it was expedient to reform. *The king! the king!* Why should they ever abuse that old religion? Who did not know that since Louis XIV. there had been no king. The war was between two republics: one, sitting in the Assembly, composed of the master minds of the age, the best citizens, was France herself; the other, the republic of abuses, held its council with the old cabinets of such as Dubois, Pompadour, and Du Barry, in the house of Diana de Polignac.

Mirabeau's speech was received with thunders of indignation and a torrent of imprecations and abuse. The eloquent rhetoric with which he refuted what nobody had said (that the word *people* is vile) was unable to dupe his auditory.

It was nine in the evening. The discussion was closed in order to take the votes. The singular precision with which the question had been brought to bear on royalty itself, caused some apprehension that the court might do the only thing that it had to do to prevent the people from being king on the morrow; it possessed brute force,—an army round Versailles, which it might employ to carry off the principal deputies, dissolve the states, and, if Paris stirred, famish Paris. This bold crime was its last cast, and people believed that it was going to be played. They wished to prevent it by constituting the Assembly that very night. This was the opinion of more than four hundred deputies; a hundred, at most, were against it. That small majority precluded, all night, by shouts and violence, every possibility of calling over the names. But this shameful sight of a majority being tyrannized over, and the Assembly endangered by a delay, together with the idea that, one moment or other, the work of liberty, the salvation of the future, might be annihilated,—all contributed to transport with fury the crowd that filled the tribunes; a man rushed forward and seized Malouet, the principal leader of the obstinate shouters, by the collar.*

* The principal witness, Bailly, does not give this circumstance, which M. Droz alone relates, doubtless on the authority of Malouet.

The man escaped. The shouts continued. In presence of that tumult, says Bailly, who presided, the assembly remained firm and worthy; as patient as strong, it waited in silence till that turbulent band had exhausted itself with shouting. An hour after midnight, the deputies being less numerous, voting was formally postponed till the morrow.

On the following morning, at the moment of voting, the president was informed that he was summoned to the *chancellerie* to receive a letter from the king. This letter, in which he reminded them that they could do nothing without the concurrence of the three orders, would have arrived just at the right moment to furnish a text for the hundred opponents, to give rise to long speeches, and unsettle and disaffect many weak minds. The Assembly, with royal gravity, adjourned the king's letter, and forbade its president to leave the hall before the end of the meeting. It wanted to vote and voted.

The different motions might be reduced to three, or rather to two:—

1st. That of Sieyes—*National Assembly*.

2ndly. That of Mounier—Assembly of the Representatives of the *Major* part of the Nation, in the absence of the *Minor* part. The equivocal formula of Mirabeau was equivalent to Mounier's, as the word *people* could be taken in a limited sense, and as the *major part of the nation*.

Mounier had the apparent advantage of a judicial literalness, an arithmetical exactness, but was fundamentally contrary to justice. It brought into symmetrical opposition, and compared, as on a level, two things of an enormously different value. The Assembly represented the nation, minus the privileged; that is to say, 96 or 98 hundredths to 4 hundredths (according to Sieyes), or 2 hundredths (according to Necker). Why should such an enormous importance be given to these 2 or 4 hundredths? Certainly not for the moral power they contained; they no longer had any. It was, in reality, because all the large properties of the kingdom, the two-thirds of the lands, were in their possession. Mounier was the advocate of the landed property against the population,—of the land against man:—a feudal, English, and materialist point of view. Sieyes had given the true French formula.

With Mounier's arithmetic and unjust justness, and with

Mirabeau's equivocation, the nation remained *a class*, and the fixed property—the land—constituted also *a class* in face of the nation. We remained in the injustice of antiquity; the Middle Ages was perpetuated—the barbarous system by which the ground was reckoned more precious than man; and the land, manure, and ashes, were the liege lords of the mind.

Sieyès, being put to the vote at once, had near five hundred votes for him, and not one hundred against him.* Therefore the Assembly was proclaimed *National Assembly*. Many cried, *Vive le Roi!*

Two interruptions again intervened, as if to stop the Assembly, —one from the nobility, who sent for a mere pretext; the other from certain deputies, who wanted to have a president and a regular *bureau* created before everything else. The Assembly proceeded immediately to the solemnity of the oath. In presence of a multitude of four thousand deeply affected spectators, the six hundred deputies, standing in profound silence, with up-raised hands and contemplating the calm, honest countenance of their president, listened to him whilst reading the formula, and exclaimed: "We swear." A universal sentiment of respect and religion filled every heart.

The Assembly was founded; it existed; it lacked but strength, the certainty of living. It secured this by asserting the right of taxation. It declared that the impost, *till then illegal*, should be collected *provisionally* "till the day of the separation of the present Assembly." This was, with one blow, condemning all the past and seizing upon the future.

It adopted openly the question of honour, the public debt, and guaranteed it.

And all these royal acts were in royal language, in the very formulæ which the king alone had hitherto taken: "The Assembly *intends and decrees*."

Finally, it evinced much concern about public subsistences. The administrative power having declined as much as the others, the legislature, the only authority then respected, was forced to interfere. It demanded, moreover, for its committee of subsistence, what the king himself had offered to the

* Four hundred and ninety-one votes against ninety. Mirabeau durst not vote either for or against, and remained at home.

deputation of the clergy,—a communication of the information that would throw a light upon this matter. But what he had then offered, he was no longer willing to grant.

The most surprised of all was Necker ; he had, in his simplicity, believed he could lead the world ; and the world was going on without him. He had ever regarded the young Assembly as his daughter—his pupil ; he warranted the king that it would be docile and well-behaved ; yet, behold, all on a sudden, without consulting its tutor, it went alone, advanced and climbed over the old barriers without deigning even to look at them. When thus motionless with astonishment, Necker received two counsels, one from a royalist, the other from a republican, and both came to the same thing. The royalist was the intendant Bertrand de Molleville,—an impassioned and narrow-minded intendant of the *ancien régime* ; the republican was Durovray, one of those democrats whom the king had driven from Geneva in 1782.

It is necessary to know who this foreigner was, who, in so serious a crisis, took so great an interest in France, and ventured to give advice. Durovray, settled in England, pensioned by the English, and grown English in heart and maxims, was, a little later, a chief of emigrants. Meanwhile, he formed a part of a little Genevese *coterie* which, unfortunately for us, was circumventing Mirabeau. England seemed to be surrounding the principal organ of French liberty.* Unfavourable towards the English till then, the great man had allowed himself to be taken by those ex-republicans,—the self-termed martyrs of liberty. The Durovrays, the Dumonts, and other indefatigable writers of mediocrity, were ever ready to assist his idleness. He was already an invalid, and going the very way to render himself worse and worse. His nights destroyed his days. In the morning he remembered the Assembly and

* These Genevese were not precisely agents of England. But the pensions they received from her,—the monstrous present of more than a million (of francs) that she made them to found an Irish Geneva (which remained on paper),—all that imposed on them the obligation to serve the English. Moreover, they became two parties. Yvernois became English and our most cruel enemy ; Clavière alone was French. What shall we say of Etienne Dumont, who pretends that those people, with their leaden pens, wrote all Mirabeau's orations ? His *Souvenirs* bear witness to a base ingratitude towards the man of genius who honoured him with his friendship.

business, and collected his thoughts ; he had there, ready at hand, the English policy, sketched by the Genevèse ; he received it with his eyes shut, and embellished it with his talent. Such was his readiness and his lack of preparation, that, at the tribune, even his admirable language was occasionally only a translation of the notes which these Genevèse handed to him from time to time.

Durovray, who was not in communication with Necker, made himself his officious counsellor in this serious crisis.

Like Bertrand de Molleville, his opinion was that the king should *annul the decree* of the Assembly, deprive it of its name of *National Assembly*, command the union of the three orders, declare himself the *Provisional Legislator of France*, and do, *by royal authority*, what the Commons had done without it. Bertrand believed justly, that, after this *coup d'état*, the Assembly could but dissolve. Durovray pretended that the Assembly, crushed and humiliated under the royal prerogative, would accept its petty part, as a machine to make laws.*

On the evening of the 17th, the heads of the clergy, Cardinal de Larochehoucauld, and the Archbishop of Paris, had hastened to Marly, and implored the king and the queen. On the 19th, vain disputes in the Chamber of the nobility ; Orleans proposed to join the Third, and Montesquieu to unite with the clergy. But there was no longer any order of the clergy. The very same day, the *curés* had transferred the majority of their order to form a union with the Third, and thus divided the order into two. The cardinal and the archbishop return the same evening to Marly, and fall at the feet of the king: "Religion is ruined!" Next, come the Parliament people: "The monarchy is lost, unless the States be dissolved."

A dangerous advice, and already impossible to follow. The flood was rising higher every hour. Versailles and Paris were in commotion. Necker had persuaded two or three of the

* Compare the two plans in Bertrand's *Mémoires* and Dumont's *Souvenirs*. The latter confesses that the Genevèse had taken good care not to confide their fine project to Mirabeau ; he was not informed of it till after the event, and then said with much good sense: "This is the way kings are led to the scaffold."

ministers, and even the king, that his project was the only means of salvation. That project had been read over again in a last and definitive council on Friday evening, the 19th; everything was finished and agreed: "The portfolios were already being shut up," says Necker, "when one of the royal servants suddenly entered; he whispered to the king; and His Majesty immediately arose, commanding his ministers to remain in their places. M. de Montmorin, sitting by my side, said to me: 'We have effected nothing; the queen alone could have ventured to interrupt the Council of State; the princes, apparently, have circumvented her.'"

Everything was stopped: this might have been foreseen; it was, doubtless, for this that the king had been brought to Marly, away from Versailles and the people; and, alone with the queen, more affectionate and liable to be influenced by her, in their common affliction for the death of their child. A fine opportunity, an excellent chance for the suggestions of the priests! Was not the Dauphin's death a severe judgment of Providence, when the king was yielding to the dangerous innovations of a Protestant minister?

The king, still undecided, but already almost overcome, was contented to command (in order to prevent the clergy from uniting with the Third Estate) that the hall should be shut on the morrow, (Saturday June 20th); the pretext was the preparations necessary for a royal meeting to be held on the Monday.

All this was settled in the night, and placarded in Versailles at six in the morning. The president of the National Assembly learned, by mere chance, that it could not be held. It was past seven when he received a letter, not from the king (as was natural, the king being accustomed to write with his own hand to the president of the Parliament), but simply a notice from young Brézé, the master of the ceremonies. It was not to the president, to M. Bailly, at his lodgings, that such a notice ought to have been given, but to the Assembly itself: Bailly had no power to act of himself. At eight o'clock, the hour appointed the night before, he repaired to the door of the hall with a great number of deputies. Being stopped by the sentinels, he protested against the hindrance, and declared the meeting convened. Several young members made a show of

breaking open the door ; the officer commanded his soldiers to arm, thus announcing that his orders contained no reservation for inviolability.

Behold our new kings, put out, kept out of doors, like unruly scholars. Behold them wandering about in the rain, among the people, on the Paris avenue. All agree about the necessity of holding the meeting and of assembling. Some shout, Let us go to the Place d'Armes ! Others, to Marly ! Another, to Paris ! This last was an extreme measure ; it was firing the powder-magazine.

The deputy Guillotin made a less hazardous motion, to repair to Old Versailles, and take up their quarters in the Tennis-court (*Jeu-de-Paume*),—a miserable, ugly, poor, and unfurnished building, but the better on that account. The Assembly also was poor, and represented the people, on that day, so much the better. They remained standing all day long, having scarcely a wooden bench. It was like the manger of the new religion,—its stable of Bethlehem !

One of those intrepid *curés* who had decided the union of the clergy—the illustrious Grégoire—long after, when the Empire had so cruelly effaced every trace of the Revolution, its parent, used often to go near Versailles to visit the ruins of Port-Royal ; one day (doubtless on his return), he entered the *Jeu-de-Paume**—the one in ruins, the other abandoned—tears flowed from the eyes of that firm man, who had never shown any weakness. Two religions to weep for ! this was too much for the heart of man.

We too revisited, in 1846, that cradle of Liberty, that place whose echo repeated her first words, that received, and still preserves her memorable oath. But what could we say to it ? What news could we give it of the world that it brought forth ? Oh ! time has not flown quickly ; generations have succeeded one another ; but the work has not progressed. When we stepped upon its venerable pavement, we felt ashamed in our heart of what we are,—of the little we have done. We felt we were unworthy, and quitted that sacred place.

* *Mémoires de Grégoire*, i., p. 380.

CHAPTER IV.

OATH AT THE JEU-DE-PAUME.

Oath at the *Jeu-de-Paume*, June 20th, 1789.—The Assembly wandering.—*A Coup d'Etat*; Necker's Project; the King's Declaration, June 23rd, 1789; the Assembly Refuses to Separate.—The King entreats Necker to remain, but does not revoke his Declaration.

BEHOLD them now in the Tennis-court, assembled in spite of the king. But what are they going to do?

Let us not forget that at that period the whole Assembly was royalist, without excepting a single member.*

Let us not forget that on the 17th, when it assumed the title of National Assembly, it shouted *Vive le Roi!* And when it attributed to itself the right of voting the impost, declaring illegal the impost collected till then, the opposition members had left the Assembly, unwilling to consecrate, by their presence, this infringement of the royal authority.†

The king, that shadow of the past, that ancient superstition, so powerful in the hall of the States-General, grew pale in the Tennis-court. The miserable building, entirely modern, bare, and unfurnished, has not a single corner where the dreams of the past can yet find shelter. Let, therefore, the pure spirit of Reason and Justice, that king of the future, reign here!

That day there was no longer any opponent;‡ the Assembly was one, in thought and heart. It was one of the moderate party, Mounier of Grenoble, who proposed to the Assembly the celebrated declaration: That wherever it might be forced to unite, there was ever the National Assembly; that *nothing could prevent it* from continuing its deliberations. And, till the com-

* See further, the 22nd of July, a note relating to Robespierre.

† As appears to me by comparing the numbers of the votes. The illegality of the impost not consented to, &c., was voted *unanimously* by the four hundred and twenty-six deputies alone remaining in the hall.—*Archives du Royaume, Procès-verbaux MSS. de l'Assemblée Nationale.*

‡ There was only one. The ninety opponents of the 17th of June joined the majority.

pletion and establishment of the constitution, it took *an oath never to separate*.

Bailly was the first who took the oath; and he pronounced it so loud and distinctly that the whole multitude of people crowding without could hear, and applauded in the excess of their enthusiasm. Shouts of *Vive le Roi!* arose from the Assembly and from the people. It was the shout of ancient France, in her extreme transports, and it was now added to the oath of resistance.*

In 1792, Mounier, then an emigrant, alone in a foreign land, questions and asks himself whether his motion of the 20th of June was founded on right; whether his loyalty as a royalist was consistent with his duty as a citizen. And even there, in emigration, and among all the prejudices of hatred and exile, he replies, Yes!

"Yes," says he, "the oath was just; they wanted the dissolution, and it would have taken place without the oath; the court, freed from the States, would never have convoked them; it would have been necessary to renounce the founding of that constitution claimed unanimously in the old writings of France." That is what a royalist, the most moderate of the moderate, a jurist accustomed to find moral decisions in positive texts, pronounces on the primordial act of our Revolution.

What were they doing all this time at Marly? On Saturday and Sunday, Necker was contending with the Parliament people, to whom the king had abandoned him, and who, with the coolness sometimes possessed by madmen, were overthrowing his project, abridging it of what might have caused it to pass, and took from it its bastard character, in order to convert it into a simple but brutal *coup d'état*, in the manner of Louis XV., a simple *lit de justice*, as the Parliament had suffered so many times. The discussion lasted till the evening. It was not till midnight that the president, then in bed, was informed that the royal meeting could not take place in the morning,—that it was postponed till Tuesday.

* The Assembly went no further. It rejected the strong, but true motion of Chapelier, who was bold enough to speak out plainly what was in the minds of all. He proposed an address: "To inform His Majesty that the enemies of the country were besieging the throne, and that their counsels tended to place the monarch at the head of a party."

The nobility had come to Marly on the Sunday in great numbers and with much turbulence. They had again showed to the king, in an address, that the question now concerned him much more than the nobility. The court was animated with a chivalrous daring ; these swordsmen seemed to wait only for a signal to resist the champions of the pen. The Count D'Artois, amid these bravadoes, became so intoxicated with insolence, as to send word to the Tennis-court that he would play on the morrow.

On the Monday morning, therefore, the Assembly found itself once more in the open streets of Versailles, wandering about, without house or home. Fine amusement for the court ! The master of the hall was afraid ; he feared the princes. The Assembly does not succeed better at the door of the Récollets where it next knocks ; the monks dare not compromise themselves. Who then are these vagrants, this dangerous band, before whom every door is shut ? Nothing less than the Nation itself.

But why not deliberate in the open air ? What more noble canopy than the sky ? But on that day the majority of the clergy wish to come and sit with the commons. Where are they to receive them ? Luckily, the hundred and thirty-four *curés*, with a few prelates at their head, had already taken up their quarters, in the morning, in the church of Saint-Louis. The Assembly was introduced there into the nave ; and the ecclesiastics, at first assembled in the choir, then came forth, and took their places among its members. A grand moment, and one of sincere joy ! " The temple of religion," says an orator, with emotion, " became the temple of the native land ! "

On that very day, Monday the 22nd, Necker was still contending, but in vain. His project, fatal to liberty because he preserved in it a shadow of moderation, had to give way to another more liberal and better calculated to place things in their proper light. Necker was now nothing more than a guilty mediator between good and evil, preserving a semblance of equilibrium between the just and the unjust,—a courtier, at the same time, of the people and the enemies of the people. At the last council held on Monday at Versailles, the princes, who were invited to it, did liberty the essential service of

removing this equivocal mediator, who prevented reason and unreasonableness from seeing each other plainly face to face.

Before the sitting begins, I wish to examine both projects,—Necker's and the court's. In what concerns the former, I will believe none but Necker himself.

NECKER'S PROJECT.

In his book of 1796, written at a time of decided reaction, Necker avows to us confidentially what his project was ; he shows that that project was, *bold, very bold*—in favour of the privileged. This confession is rather painful for him, and he makes it by an effort. “The defect of my project was its being too bold ; I risked all that it was possible for me to risk. Explain yourself. I will, and I ought. Deign to listen to me.”*

He is speaking to the emigrants, to whom this apology is addressed. A vain undertaking ! How will they ever forgive him for having called the people to political life, and made five millions of electors ?

1st. Those necessary, inevitable reforms, which the court had so long refused, and which they accepted only by force, he promulgated by the king. He, who knew, to his cost, that the king was the puppet of the queen and the court, a mere cipher, nothing more,—even he became a party for the continuing of that sad comedy.

Liberty, that sacred right which exists of itself, he made a present from the king, a *granted charter*, as was the charter of the invasion in 1814. But it required thirty years of war, and all Europe at Paris, for France to accept that constitution of falsehood.

2ndly. No legislative unity,—*two Chambers*, at least. This was like a timid advice to France to become English ; in which there were two advantages : to strengthen the privileged, priests and nobles, henceforth concentrated in one upper Chamber ; next, to make it easier for the king to amuse the people, to refuse by the upper Chamber, instead of refusing by himself, and of having (as we see to-day) two vetos for one.

3rdly. The king was to permit the three orders to deliberate in common on *general* affairs ; but as to *privileges* of personal distinction, of honour, and as to *rights attached to fiefs*, no dis-

* *Œuvres de Necker*, vi., p. 191.

cussion in common. Now this was precisely what France considered as the superlatively *general* business. Who then dared to see a special business in the question of honour?

4thly. These crippled States-General, now united, now separated into three orders, at one time active, at another supine, through their triple movement, Necker balances, shackles, and neutralises still more, by *provincial States*, thus augmenting division, when France is thirsting for unity.

5thly. That is what he gives, and as soon as given, he takes away again. This fine legislative machine is never to be seen at work by anybody; he grudges us the sight of it; it is to work with closed doors: *no publicity of its sittings*. The law is thus to be made, far from daylight, in the dark, as one would make a plot against the law.

6thly.—The law? What does this word mean, without personal liberty? Who can act, elect, or vote freely, when nobody is sure of sleeping at home? This first condition of social life, anterior to, and indispensable for political action, is not yet secured by Necker. The king is to invite the Assembly to seek the means that might permit the abolition of the *lettres-de-cachet*. Meanwhile, he keeps them together with the arbitrary power of kidnapping, the state-prisons, and the Bastille.

Such is the extreme concession which ancient royalty makes, in its most favourable moment, and urged on by a popular minister. Moreover, it cannot go even thus far. The nominal king promises; the real king, the court—laughs at the promise. Let them die in their sin!

THE KING'S DECLARATION (JUNE 23, 1789).

The plan of the court is worth more than the bastard plan of Necker; at least it is plainer to understand. Whatever is bad in Necker is precious preserved, nay richly augmented.

This act, which may be called the testament of despotism, is divided into two parts: 1st. The prohibition of securities: under this head, Declaration concerning the *present* holding of the States. 2ndly. The reforms and benefits as they say,*

* The style on a par with the matter; now bombastic, now flat, and strongly savouring of false valour: "Never did a king do so much!" Towards the end is a phrase of admirable impudence and awkwardness (Necker claims it accordingly, tome ix., p. 196): "Reflect, gentlemen, that none of your projects can have the force of law without my special approbation."

Declaration of the king's *intentions*, of his wishes and desires for future contingencies. The evil is sure, and the good possible. Let us see the detail.

I. The king annihilates the will of five millions of electors, declaring that their demands are only information.

The king annihilates the decisions of the deputies of the Third Estate, declaring them "null, illegal, unconstitutional."

The king will have the three orders remain distinct, that one may be able to shackle the others (that two hundredths of the nation may weigh as much as the whole nation).

If they wish to meet, he permits it, but *only for this time*, and also only for *general* business; in this general business is included neither the rights of the three orders, the constitution of the future States, the feudal and seigneurial properties, nor the privileges of money or of honour. All the *ancien régime* is thus found to be an exception.

All this was the work of the court. Here is, according to every appearance, the king's manifesto, the one he fondly cherished, and wrote himself. The order of the clergy shall have a special *veto* (against the nobility and the Third Estate) for everything relating to religion, the discipline and government of the secular *and regular* orders. Thus, not one monk less; no reform to be made. And all those convents, every day more odious and useless, and unable any longer to be recruited, the clergy wanted to maintain. The nobility was furious. It lost its dearest hope. It had reckoned that, one day or other, that prey would fall into its hands; at the very least, it hoped that, if the king and the people pressed it too much to make some sacrifice, it would generously make that of the clergy.

Veto on veto. For what purpose? Here we have a refinement of precautions, far more sure to render every result impossible. In the common deliberations of the three orders, it is sufficient that the *two-thirds of one order* protest against the deliberation, for the decision to be referred to the king. Nay more, the thing being decided, it is *sufficient that a hundred members* protest for the decision to be referred to the king. That is to say, that the words assembly, deliberation, and decision, are only a mystification, a farce. And who could lay it without laughing?

II. Now come the BENEFITS : publicity for finance, voting of taxes, regulation of the expenditure for which *the States will indicate the means*, and his Majesty “will adopt them, *if they be compatible with the kingly dignity*, and the despatch of the public service.”

Second benefit : The king will sanction the equality of taxation, *when the clergy and the nobility shall be willing to renounce their pecuniary privileges.*

Third benefit : Properties shall be respected, *especially tithes, feudal rights, and duties.*

Fourth benefit : Individual liberty ? No. The king invites the States to *seek* for and to *propose* to him means for *reconciling* the abolition of the *lettres-de-cachet*, with the precautions *necessary* either for protecting the honour of families, or for repressing the commencement of sedition, &c.

Fifth : Liberty of the press ? No. The States shall *seek* the means of *reconciling* the liberty of the press with *the respect due to religion*, the morals, and the honour of the citizens.

Sixth : Admission to every employment ? No. Refused *expressly for the army*. The king declares, *in the most decided manner*, that he will preserve entire, and without the slightest alteration, *the institution of the army*. That is to say, that the plebeian shall never attain any grade; &c. Thus does the idiotic legislator subject everything to violence, force, and the sword : and this is the very moment he chooses to break his own. Let him now call soldiers, surround the assembly with them, and urge them towards Paris ; they are so many defenders that he gives to the Revolution.

On the eve of the grand day, three deputies of the nobility, MM. d'Aiguillon, de Menou, and de Montmorency, came at midnight to inform the president of the results of the last council, held the same evening at Versailles : “ M. Necker will not countenance, by his presence, a project contrary to his own ; he will not come to the meeting ; and will doubtless depart.” The meeting opened at ten o'clock ; and Bailly was able to tell the deputies, and the latter many others, the grand secret of the day. Opinions might have been divided and duped, had the popular minister been seen sitting beside the king ; he being absent, the king remained discovered, and forsaken by public opinion. The court had hoped to play their

game at Necker's expense, and to be sheltered by him; they have never forgiven him for not having allowed himself to be abused and dishonoured by them.

What proves that everything was known is, that on his very exit from the castle, the king found the crowd sullenly silent.* The affair had got abroad, and the grand scene, so highly wrought, had not the least effect.

The miserable petty spirit of insolence which swayed the court, had suggested the idea of causing the two superior orders to enter in front, by the grand entrance, and the commons behind, and to keep them under a shed, half in the rain. The Third Estate, thus humbled, wet and dirty, was to have entered crest-fallen, to receive its lesson.

Nobody to introduce them; the door shut; and the guard within. Mirabeau to the president: "Sir, conduct the nation into the presence of the king!" The president knocks at the door. The body-guards from within: "Presently." The president: "Gentlemen, where is then the master of the ceremonies?" The body-guards: "We know nothing about it." The deputies: "Well then, let us go; come away!" At last the president succeeds in bringing forth the captain of the guards, who goes in quest of Brézé.

The deputies, filing in one by one, find, in the hall, the clergy and the nobility, who, already in their places, and holding the meeting, seem to be awaiting them, like judges. In other respects, the hall was empty. Nothing could be more desolate than that hall, from which the people were excluded.

The king read, with his usual plainness of manner, the speech composed for him,—that despotic language so strange from his lips. He perceived but little its provoking violence, for he appeared surprised at the aspect of the Assembly. The nobles having applauded the article consecrating feudal rights, loud distinct voices were heard to utter: "Silence there!"

The king, after a moment's pause and astonishment, concluded with a grave, intolerable sentence, which flung down the gauntlet to the Assembly, and began the war: "If you abandon me in so excellent an enterprise, I will, alone, effect

* Dumont (an eye-witness), p. 91.

the welfare of my people ; *alone, I shall consider myself as their true representative !*”

And at the end : “ *I order you, gentlemen, to disperse immediately, and to repair to-morrow morning to the chambers appropriated to your order, there to resume your sitting.*”

The king departed, followed by the nobility and the clergy. The commons remained seated, calm, and silent.* The master of the ceremonies then entered, and said to the president in a low tone : “ Sir, you heard the king’s order !” He replied : “ The Assembly adjourned after the royal meeting ; I cannot dismiss it till it has deliberated.” Then turning towards his colleagues near him : “ It seems to me that the assembled nation cannot receive any orders.”

That sentence was admirably taken up by Mirabeau, who addressed it to the master of the ceremonies. With his powerful and imposing voice, and with terrible dignity, he hurled back these words : “ We have heard the intentions suggested to the king ; and you, sir, who can never be his organ to the National Assembly, you, who have here neither place, voice, nor right to speak, you are not a man to remind us of his discourse. Go and tell those who send you, that we are here by the will of the people, and are to be driven hence only by the power of bayonets.”†

Brézé was disconcerted, thunderstruck ; he felt the power of that new royalty, and, rendering to the one what etiquette commanded for the other, he retired walking backwards, as was the custom before the king.‡

The court had imagined another way to disperse the commons,—a brutal means formerly employed with success in the

* There was neither hesitation, nor consternation, notwithstanding what Dumont says, who was not there. The ardent, like Grégoire (*Mém.*, i., 381), and the moderate, like Malouet, were perfectly agreed. The latter says, on this head, these fine and simple words : “ We had no other course to take. We owed France a constitution.”—Malouet, *Compte-rendu à mes Commitants*.

† This version is the only one likely. Mirabeau was a royalist ; he would never have said : “ *Go and tell your master,*” nor the other words that have been added.

‡ Related by M. Frochot, an eye-witness, to the son of Mirabeau. (*Mém.*, vi., p. 39). That family has thought proper to contest a few details of this well-known scene, forty-four years after the event.

States-General,—merely to have the hall dismantled, to demolish the amphitheatre and the king's estrade. Workmen accordingly enter ! but, at one word from the president, they stop, lay down their tools, contemplate with admiration the calm majesty of the Assembly, and become attentive and respectful auditors.

A deputy proposed to discuss the king's resolutions on the morrow. He was not listened to. Camus laid down forcibly, and it was declared : " That the sitting was but a ministerial act, and that the Assembly persisted in its decrees." Barnave, the young member for Dauphiny : " You have declared what you are ; you need no sanction." Glezen, the Breton : " How now ! does the sovereign speak as a master, when he ought to consult !" Petion, Buzot, Garat, Grégoire, spoke with equal energy ; and Sieyès, with simplicity : " Gentlemen, you are to-day what you were yesterday."

The Assembly next declared, on Mirabeau's proposal, that its members were inviolable ; that whoever laid hands on a deputy was a traitor, infamous, and worthy of death.

This decree was not useless. The body-guards had formed in a line in front of the hall. It was expected that sixty deputies would be kidnapped in the night.

The nobility, headed by their president, went straightway to thank their protector, the Count d'Artois, and afterwards to Monsieur, who was prudent and took care not to be at home. Many of them went to see the queen, who, triumphant and smiling, leading her daughter and carrying the dauphin, said to them : " I intrust him to the nobility."

The king was far from sharing their joy. The silence of the people, so new to him, had overwhelmed him. When Brézé, who came and informed him that the deputies of the Third Estate remained sitting, asked for orders, he walked about for a few minutes, and said at last, in the tone of one tired to death : " Very well ; leave them alone."

The king spoke wisely. The moment was fraught with danger. One step more and Paris marched against Versailles. Versailles was already in commotion. Behold five or six thousand men advancing towards the castle. The queen sees with terror that strange and novel court, which, in a moment, fills the gardens, the terraces, and even the apartments. She

begs, she entreats the king to undo what she has done, to recall Necker. His return did not take long; he was there, near at hand, convinced, as usual, that nothing could ever go on without him. Louis XVI. said to him good-naturedly: "For my part I am not at all tenacious of that declaration."

Necker required no more, and made no condition. His vanity once satisfied, his delight in hearing everybody shout *Necker!* deprived him of every other thought. He went out, overjoyed, into the great court of the castle, and to comfort the multitude, passed in the midst of them. There a few silly persons fell on their knees and kissed his hands. He, much affected, said: "Yes, my children,—yes, my children,—I remain; be comforted." He burst into tears, and then shut himself up in his cabinet.

The poor tool of the court remained without exacting anything; he remained to shield the cabal with his name, to serve them as an advertisement, and reassure them against the people; he restored courage to those worthies, and gave them the time to summon more troops.

CHAPTER V.

MOVEMENT OF PARIS.

Assembly of the Electors, June 25th.—Insurrection of the French Guards.—Agitation of the Palais Royal.—Intrigues of the Orleans party.—The King commands the junction of the Orders, June 27th.—The people deliver the French Guards, June 30th.—The Court prepares for War.—Paris demands permission to arm.—Necker dismissed, July 11th, 1789.

THE situation of things was strange,—evidently temporary.

The Assembly had not obeyed. But the king had not revoked anything.

The king had recalled Necker; but he kept the Assembly like a prisoner among his troops; he had excluded the public from the sitting; the grand entrance remained shut; the Assembly entered by the small one, and debated with closed doors.

The Assembly protested feebly and but slightly. The resistance, on the 23rd, seemed to have exhausted its strength.

Paris did not imitate its weakness.

It was not content to see its deputies making laws in prison.

On the 24th the ferment was terrible.

On the 25th it burst out in three different ways at once ; by the electors, by the crowd, and by the soldiery.

The seat of the Revolution fixes itself at Paris.

The electors had agreed to meet again after the elections, in order to complete their instructions to the deputies whom they had elected. Though the ministry refused its permission,* the *coup d'état*, on the 23rd, urged them on ; they had likewise their *coup d'état*, and assembled, of their own accord, on the 25th, in the Rue Dauphine. A wretched assembly-room, occupied at that moment by a wedding-party, which made room for them, received, at first, the Assembly of the electors of Paris. This was their Tennis-court. There Paris, through their medium, made an engagement to support the National Assembly. One of them, Thuriot, advised them to go to the Hotel-de-Ville, into the great hall of Saint-Jean, which nobody durst refuse them.

These electors were mostly rich men, citizens of note ; the aristocracy was numerous in this body ; but among them were, also, men of over-excited minds. First, two men, fervent *révolutionnaires*, with a singular tendency to mysticism ; one was the *abbé* Fauchet, eloquent and intrepid ; the other, his friend Bonneville, (the translator of Shakespeare). Both, in the thirteenth century, would have caused themselves, most certainly, to be burnt as heretics. In the nineteenth they were as forward as any, or rather the first, to propose resistance ; which was scarcely to be expected from the burgess assembly of the electors.† On the 6th of June, Bonneville proposed that Paris should be armed, and was the first to cry, " To arms." ‡

* Compare the *Mémoires de Bailly* with the *Procès-verbal des Electeurs*, drawn up by *Bailly et Duveyrier*.

† Yet, nowhere had more reliance been placed on the weakness of the people. The well-known gentleness of Parisian manners, the multitude of government people, and financiers, who could but lose in a rebellion, the crowds of those who lived on abuses, had altogether created a belief, before the elections, that Paris would prove very citizen-like, easy, and timid. See *Bailly*, pp. 16, 150.

‡ Dussaulx, *Œuvre des Sept Jours*, p. 271, (ed. 1822).

Fauchet, Bonneville, Bertolio, and Carra, a violent journalist, made these bold motions, which ought to have been made from the first in the National Assembly:—firstly, the Citizen Guard; secondly, the early organization of a true, elective, and annual *Commune*; thirdly, an address to the King, for the removal of the troops and the liberty of the Assembly, and for the revocation of the *coup d'état* of the 23rd.

On the very day of the first assembly of the electors, as if the cry *to arms* had resounded in the barracks, the soldiers of the French Guards, confined for several days past, overpowered their guard, walked about in Paris, and went to fraternise with the people in the Palais Royal. For some time past, secret societies had been forming among them; they swore they would obey no orders that might be contrary to those of the Assembly. The Act of the 23rd, in which the king declared, in the strongest manner, that *he would never change the institution of the army*; that is to say, that the nobility should for ever monopolize every grade, and that the plebeian could never rise, but that the common soldier would die in the ranks:—that unjustifiable declaration necessarily finished what the revolutionary contagion had begun.

The French Guards, residents in Paris, and mostly married men, had seen the *dépôt* in which the children of the soldiers were educated, free of expense, shortly before suppressed by M. Du Châtelet, their hard-hearted colonel. The only change made in the *military institutions*, was made against them.

In order to appreciate properly the words *institution of the army*, we should know, that in the budget of that time, the officers were reckoned at forty-six millions (of francs), and the soldiers at forty-four.* We should know, that Jourdan, Joubert, and Kléber, who had served at first, quitted the military profession, as a desperate career,—a sort of no thoroughfare. Augereau was an under-officer in the infantry, Hoche a sergeant in the French Guards, and Marceau a common soldier; those noble-hearted and aspiring youths were fixed in this low condition for ever. Hoche, who was twenty-one years of age, nevertheless completed his own education, as if about to be a General-in-Chief; he devoured everything,

* Necker, *Administration*, ii., 422, 435. (1784).

literature, politics, and even philosophy ; must we add, that this great man, in order to purchase a few books, used to embroider officers' waistcoats, and sell them in a coffee-house.* The trifling pay of a soldier was, under one pretence or other, absorbed by deductions, which the officers squandered away among themselves.†

The insurrection of the French Guards was not a pretorian mutiny, a brutal riot of the soldiery,—it came in support of the declarations of the electors and the people. That truly French troop, Parisian in a great measure, followed the lead of Paris, followed the law, the living law,—the National Assembly.

They arrived in the Palais Royal, saluted, pressed, embraced, and almost stifled by the crowd. The soldier, that true paria of the ancient monarchy, so ill-treated by the nobles, is welcomed by the people. And what is he, under his uniform, but the very people ? Two brothers have met each other, the soldier and the citizen, two children of the same mother ; they fall into each other's arms, and burst into tears.

Hatred and party-spirit have vilified all that, disfigured those grand scenes, and soiled the page of history, at pleasure. A vast importance has been attached to this or that ridiculous anecdote ; a worthy amusement for petty minds ! All these immense commotions they have attributed to some miserable, insignificant causes. Paltry fools ! try to explain by a straw, washed away by the waves, the agitation of the ocean.

No : those movements were those of a whole people, true, sincere, immense, and unanimous ; France had her share in them, and so had Paris ; all men, (each in his own degree,) acted, some with their hands and voices, others with their minds, with their fervent wishes, from the depths of their hearts.

But why do I say France ? It would be more true to say the world. An envious enemy, a Genevese, imbued with every English prejudice, cannot help avowing, that at that decisive moment, the whole world was looking on, observing with uneasy sympathy the march of our Revolution, and feeling that France was doing, at her own risk and peril, the business of mankind.‡

Arthur Young, an English agriculturist, a positive, special

* Rousselin, *Vie de Hoche*, i., 20.

† The single regiment of Beauce believed it was cheated of the sum of 240,727 francs.

‡ E. Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 135.

man, who had, whimsically enough, come to France, to study its modes of agriculture, at such a moment, is astonished at the deep silence reigning about Paris ; no coach, hardly a man. The terrible agitation concentrating everything within, made a desert of all beyond. He enters ; the tumult frightens him ; he traverses, in astonishment, that noisy capital. He is taken to the Palais Royal, the centre of the conflagration, the burning focus of the furnace. Ten thousand men were speaking at once ; ten thousand lights in the windows ; it was a day of victory for the people ; fire-works were let off, and bonfires made. Dazzled and confounded by that moving Babel, he hastily retires. Yet the lively and excessive emotion of that people, united in one common thought, soon gains upon the traveller ; he gradually becomes associated, without even being aware of his change of sentiments, to the hopes of liberty ; the Englishman prays for France.*

All men forgot themselves. The place, that strange place where the scene was passing, seemed, at such moments, to forget itself. The Palais Royal was no longer the Palais Royal. Vice, in the grandeur of so sincere a passion, in the heat of enthusiasm, became pure for an instant. The most degraded raised their heads, and gazed at the sky ; their past life, like a bad dream, was gone, at least for a day ; they could not be virtuous, but they felt themselves heroic, in the name of the liberties of the world ! Friends of the people, brothers to one another, having no longer any selfish feeling, and quite ready to share everything.

That there were interested agitators in that multitude, cannot be doubted. The minority of the nobility, ambitious men, fond of noise, such as Lameth and Dupont, worked upon the people by their pamphlets and agents. Others, still worse, joined them. All that took place, we must say, beneath the windows of the Duke of Orleans, before the eyes of that intriguing, greedy, polluted court. Alas ! who would not pity our Revolution ! That ingenuous, disinterested, sublime movement, spied and overlooked by those who hoped one day or other to turn it to their advantage !

* Of course with many exceptions, and on condition that France adopts the constitution of England. Arthur Young's Travels, vol. i., *passim*.

Let us look at those windows. There I see distinctly a pure woman and a wicked man. These are Virtue and Vice, the king's counsellors, Madame de Genlis and Choderlos de Laclos. The parts are distinctly separated. In that house, where everything is false, Virtue is represented by Madame de Genlis,—hard-heartedness and mawkish sensibility, a torrent of tears and ink, the quackery of a model education, and the constant exhibition of the pretty Pamela.* On this side of the palace is the philanthropic *bureau*, where charity is organised with much ostentation on the eve of elections.†

The time has gone by when the jockey-prince used to lay a wager after supper to run stark naked from Paris to Bagatelle. He is now the statesman before everything else, the head of a party; his mistresses will have it so. They have fondly wished for two things,—a good law for divorces, and a change of dynasty. The political confidant of the prince is that gloomy taciturn man, who seems to say: "I conspire, we conspire." That mysterious Laclos who, by his little book, *Liaisons dangereuses*, flatters himself that he has caused the romantic to pass from vice to crime, and insinuates therein that flagitious gallantry is a useful prelude to political villany. That is the name he covets of all others, and that part he acts to perfection. Many, in order to flatter the prince, say: "Laclos is a villain."

It was not easy, however, to make a leader of this Duke of Orleans; he was broken down at that period, wasted in body and heart, and of very weak mind. Swindlers made him fabricate gold in the garrets of the Palais Royal, and they had made him acquainted with the devil.‡

* Even so far as to send her, on horseback, into the middle of the riot, followed by a domestic in the Orleans livery.—Read the *Souvenirs* (i., p. 189,) of Madame Lebrun, who was a witness of this scene.

† Brissot worked there some time.—*Mémoires*, ii., p. 430.

‡ The prince made gold, as it is ever made, with gold. However, among other ingredients, it was necessary to have a human skeleton that had been buried so many years and days. They sought among such dead bodies as were known, and it so happened that Pascal exactly fulfilled the conditions required. They bribed the keepers of Saint Etienne-du-Mont, and poor Pascal was handed over to the crucibles of the Palais Royal. Such, at least, is the account of a person, who, having long lived with Madame de Genlis, received from her this strange anecdote.

Another difficulty was, that this prince, besides all his acquired vices, possessed a natural one, both fundamental and durable, which does not cease with exhaustion, like the others, but remains faithful to its master: I mean avarice. "I would give," he would say, "public opinion for a six-franc piece." This was not an idle word. He had put it well in practice, when, in spite of public clamour, he built the Palais Royal.

His political advisers were not skilful enough to raise him from such abasement. They caused him to commit more than one false and imprudent step.

In 1788, Madame de Genlis' brother, a youth without any other title than that of officer in the house of Orleans, writes to the king, to ask nothing less than to be prime minister,—to get the place of Necker or Turgot; he will undertake to re-establish in a moment the finances of the monarchy. The Duke of Orleans allows himself to be the bearer of the incredible missive, hands it to the king, recommends it, and becomes the laughing-stock of the court.

The sage counsellors of the prince had hoped thus to bring the government quietly into his hands. Deceived in their hopes, they acted more openly, endeavoured to make a Guise a Cromwell, and courted the people. There, also, they met with great difficulties. All were not dupes; the city of Orleans did not elect the prince; and, by way of retaliation, he unceremoniously withdrew from it the benefits by which he had expected to purchase his election.

And yet nothing had been spared, neither money nor intrigue. Those who had the management of the business had had the precaution to attach a whole pamphlet of Sieyès to the electoral instructions which the duke sent into his domains, and thus to place their master under the name and patronage of that great thinker, then so popular, who however had no kind of connection with the Duke of Orleans.

When the Commons took the decisive step of assuming the title of *National Assembly*, the Duke of Orleans was informed that the time was come to show himself, to speak and act, and that a leader of a party could not remain mute. They prevailed upon him at least to read a speech of some four lines to engage the nobility to unite with the Third Estate. He did so; but whilst reading, his heart failed him, and he fainted. On

opening his vest, they saw that, in the dread of being assassinated by the court, this over-prudent prince used to wear, by way of cuirass, five or six waistcoats.*

The day the *coup d'état* failed (June 23), the duke believed the king lost, and himself king on the morrow, or next day; he could not conceal his joy.† The terrible fermentation in Paris on that evening and the next morning, sufficiently announced that a vast insurrection would burst forth. On the 25th, the minority of the nobility, perceiving that they must decline in importance if Paris should be the first to begin, went, with the Duke of Orleans at their head, to join the Commons. The prince's man, Sillery, the convenient husband of Madame de Genlis, pronounced, in the name of all, an ill-concocted discourse, such as might have been made by a mediator, an accepted arbiter between the king and the people: "Let us never lose sight of the respect that we owe to the best of kings. He offers us peace; can we refuse to accept it?" &c. In the evening, great was the rejoicing in Paris for this union of the noble friends of the people. An address to the assembly was lying at the Café de Foy; everybody signed it, as many as three thousand persons, in haste, and most of them without reading it. That article, drawn by an able hand, contained one strange word respecting the Duke of Orleans: "This Prince, the object of public *veneration*." Such a word, for such a man, seemed cruelly derisive; an enemy would not have been more bitter. The duke's awkward agents believed apparently that the boldest eulogium would also be the best paid.

Thank God! the grandeur, the immensity of the movement, spared the Revolution that unworthy mediator. Ever since the 25th, the excitement was so unanimous, and the concord so powerful, that the agitators themselves; hurried along by it, were obliged to abandon every pretension of directing it. Paris led the leaders. The Catalines of the saloons and *cafés* had only to follow in its train. An authority was suddenly found to be in Paris, which had been supposed to be without any chief or guide, the assembly of the electors. On the other hand, as the French Guards began to declare themselves, it was easy to

* Ferrières, i., p. 52.

† Arthur Young, who was dining with him and other deputies, was shocked at seeing him laughing in his sleeve.

foresee that the new authority would not be wanting in force. To sum up all in one word, these anxious mediators might remain quiet ; if the assembly was a prisoner at Versailles, it had its asylum here, in the very heart of France, and, if necessary, Paris for an army.

The court, trembling with anger and indignation, and still more with fear, decided, on the evening of the 26th, to grant the re-union of the orders. The king invited the nobility to it, and in order to reserve to himself a means of protesting against all that was being done, the Count d'Artois was made to write those imprudent words (then untrue) : " The king's life is in danger."

On the 27th, therefore, the long-expected union at length took place. The rejoicing at Versailles was excessive, foolish, and ungovernable. The people made bonfires, and shouted "*Vive la Reine!*" The queen was obliged to appear in the balcony. The crowd then asked her to show them the dauphin, as a token of complete reconciliation and oblivion. She consented again, and re-appeared with her child. She did but so much the more despise that credulous crowd ; and she sent for troops.

She had taken no part in the union of the orders. And could it truly be called a union ? They were still enemies, though now assembled in the selfsame hall, brought into contact, and looking at one another. The clergy had made their express restrictions. The protest of the nobles were brought forward one by one, like so many challenges, and engrossed the whole time of the Assembly ; such as came, did not condescend to sit, but wandered about, or stood gazing like simple spectators. They did sit, but elsewhere,—in a meeting of their own. Many had said that they were leaving, but still remained at Versailles ; evidently, they were waiting.

The Assembly was wasting time. The lawyers, who composed the majority, spoke frequently and at great length, trusting too much to language. According to them, if the constitution were but made, everything was saved. As if a constitution can be anything with a government continually conspiring ! A paper liberty, written or verbal, whilst despotism possesses the power and the sword ! This is nonsense,—absurdity !

But neither the court nor Paris desired any compromise. Everything was inclining towards open violence. The military gentlemen of the court were impatient to act. M. Du Châtelet, the colonel of the French Guards, had already sent to the Abbaye eleven of those soldiers who had sworn to obey no orders contrary to those of the Assembly. Neither did he stop there. He wanted to remove them from the military prison, and send them to the one for thieves, to that horrible sink, gaol and hospital at once, which subjected to the same lash the galley-slaves and the *vénériens*.^{*} The terrible case of Latude, cast there to die, had revealed Bicêtre,—thrown the first light upon it; and a recent book, by Mirabeau, had filled every heart with disgust and every mind with terror.[†] And it was there they were going to imprison men whose greatest offence was to wish to be only the soldiers of the law.

The very day they were to be transferred to Bicêtre, the news reached the Palais Royal. A young man standing upon a chair, called out, "To the Abbaye! and let us deliver those who would not fire upon the people!" Soldiers offer themselves; but the citizens thank them, and go alone. The crowd increases on the road, and is joined by workmen with strong iron bars. At the Abbaye, they were four thousand in number. They burst open the wicket, and break down the large inside doors with their mallets, axes, and crow-bars. The victims are liberated. As they were going out, they met a body of hussars and dragoons, who were arriving full gallop with their swords drawn. The people rush at their bridles; an explanation ensues; the soldiers will not massacre the soldiers' deliverers; they sheathe their swords, and take off their helmets; wine is brought; and they all drink together to the king and the nation.

Everybody in the prison was set at liberty at the same time. The crowd conduct their conquest home,—to the Palais Royal. Among the prisoners delivered, they carried off an old soldier who had been rotting many years in the Abbaye, and was no

^{*} Will it be believed that in 1790, they still executed at Bicêtre the old barbarous ordinances which prescribed that the medical treatment of such patients should begin by a flagellation? The celebrated doctor Cullorier stated the fact to one of my friends.


[†] *Observations d'un Anglais sur Bicêtre, trad. et commentées par Mirabeau, 1788.*

longer able to walk. The poor fellow, who had so long been accustomed to receive nothing but ill-treatment, was overpowered by his emotion: "I shall die, gentlemen," said he, "so much kindness will kill me!"

There was only one great criminal among them, and he was taken back to prison. All the others, citizens, soldiers, and prisoners, forming an immense procession, arrive at the Palais Royal. There they place a table in the garden, and make them all sit down. The difficulty was to lodge them. They house them for the night in the *Théâtre des Variétés*, and mount guard at the door. The next morning, they were located in an hotel, under the arcades, and paid for and fed by the people. All night, either side of Paris had been illuminated, the neighbourhood of the Abbaye and the Palais Royal. Citizens, workmen, rich and poor, dragoons, hussars, and French Guards, all walked about together, and no other noise was heard but the shouts of "*Vive la nation!*" They all gave themselves up to the transports of that fraternal union, to their dawning confidence in the birth of liberty.

Early in the morning, the young men were at Versailles, at the doors of the Assembly. There, everything wore a freezing aspect. A military insurrection and a prison broken open, appeared, at Versailles, most ill-omened. Mirabeau, avoiding the chief question, proposed an address to the Parisians, to advise them to be orderly. They at length came to the conclusion (not very comfortable for those who claimed the interference of the Assembly) of declaring that the affair belonged to nobody but the king, and all they could do was to implore his clemency.

This was on the 1st of July. On the 2nd, the king wrote,—not to the Assembly, but to the Archbishop of Paris,—that if the eulprits returned to prison, he might pardon them. The crowd considered this promise so unsatisfactory, that they repaired to the Hotel-de-Ville and demanded of the electors what they were to believe. The latter hesitated a long time; but the crowd insisted; and was increasing every instant. An hour after midnight, the electors promise to go on the morrow to Versailles, and *not to return without the pardon*. Trusting to their word, the liberated again returned to prison, and were soon enlarged.



This was not a state of peace. Paris was surrounded by war: all the foreign troops had arrived. The old Marshal De Broglie, that Hercules and Achilles of the old monarchy, had been called to command them. The queen had sent for Breteuil, her confidential man, the ex-ambassador at Vienna, a valiant penman, but who, for noise and bravado, was equal to any swordsman. "His big manly voice sounded like energy; he used to step heavily and stamp with his foot, as if he would conjure an army out of the earth."

All this warlike preparation at length aroused the Assembly. Mirabeau, who had read on the 27th an address for peace, without being listened to, now proposed a new one for the removal of the troops; that sonorous and harmonious speech, extremely flattering for the king, was very much relished by the Assembly. The best thing it contained, a demand for a citizen guard, was the only part they suppressed.*

The Paris electors, who had been the first to make this request now rejected by the Assembly, resumed it energetically on the 10th of July. Carra, in a very abstract dissertation, in the manner of Sieyès, set forth the right of the Commune,—an imprescriptible right, and, said he, *even anterior to that of the monarchy*, which right specially comprehends that of self-protection. Bonneville demanded, in his own name, and in that of his friend Fauchet, that they should pass on from theory to practice, and think of constituting themselves as a commune, preserving *provisionally* the *pretended* municipal body. Charton wished moreover the sixty districts to be assembled again, their decisions to be transmitted to the National Assembly, and a *correspondence to be formed with the chief cities* of the kingdom. All these bold motions were made in the great hall of Saint-Jean, in the Hôtel de Ville, in presence of an immense multitude. Paris seemed to crowd fondly about this authority which it had created, and to trust to no other; it wanted to obtain from it the permission to organize and arm itself, and thus to work out its own salvation.

* It is not unlikely that the Duke of Orleans, seeing that his mediation was by no means solicited, urged Mirabeau to speak, in order to perplex the court, before it had completed its preparations for war. M. Droz assigns to this period the first connexion of Mirabeau with Lacroix, and the money he received from him.

The weakness of the National Assembly was not calculated to give it comfort. On the 11th of July it had received the king's answer to the address, and remained satisfied with it. Yet, what was the answer? That the troops were there to secure the liberty of the Assembly; but that, if they gave umbrage, the king would transfer it to Noyon or Soissons; that is, would place it between two or three divisions of the army. Mirabeau could not prevail on them to insist on the troops being removed. It was evident that the junction of the five hundred deputies of the clergy and nobility had enervated the Assembly. It set the grand business aside, and gave its attention to a declaration of the rights of man presented by Lafayette.

One of the moderate, most moderate members, the philanthropic Guillotin, went to Paris on purpose to communicate this state of tranquillity to the assembly of the electors. That honest man, doubtless deceived, assured them that everything was going on prosperously, and that M. Necker was stronger than ever. That excellent news was hailed with loud applause, and the electors, no less duped than the Assembly, amused themselves in like manner with admiring the declaration of rights which, by good fortune, was also just brought from Versailles. That very day, whilst honest Guillotin was speaking, M. Necker, dismissed, was already very far on his road to Brussels.

When Necker received the order to depart immediately, it was three o'clock, and he was sitting down to table. The poor man, who always so tenderly embraced the ministry, and never left it without weeping, contrived however to restrain his emotion before his guests, and to keep his countenance. After dinner he departed with his wife, without even giving notice to his daughter, and took the nearest way out of the country,—the road to the Netherlands. The queen's party, shameful to relate, were anxious to have him arrested; they were so little acquainted with Necker, that they were afraid he might disobey the king, and throw himself into Paris.

MM. de Broglie and de Breteuil, the first day they were summoned, had themselves been frightened to see the dangers into which they were running. Broglie was unwilling that Necker should be sent away. Breteuil is said to have exclaimed: "Give us then a hundred thousand men and a

hundred millions." "You shall have them," said the queen. And they set about secretly fabricating paper-money.*

M. de Broglie, taken unawares, stooping beneath his burden of seventy-one years, bustled about but did nothing. Orders and counter-orders flew to and fro. His mansion was the headquarters, full of scribes, ordinances, and aides-de-camp, ready to mount on horse-back. "They made out a list of general officers and drew up an order of battle."†

The military authorities were not too well agreed among themselves. There were no less than three commanders. Broglie, who was about to be minister, Puysegur, who was so still, and lastly Besenval, who had had for eight years the command of the provinces of the interior, and to whom they intimated unceremoniously that he would have to obey the old marshal. Besenval explained to him the dangerous position of things, and that they were not *en campagne*, but before a city of eight hundred thousand souls in a state of feverish excitement. Broglie would not listen to him. Strong in his conceit of his Seven Years' War, being acquainted with nothing but soldiers and physical force, full of contempt for citizens, he felt perfectly convinced that at the mere sight of an uniform the people would run away. He did not consider it necessary to send troops to Paris; he merely surrounded it with foreign regiments, being quite unconcerned about thus increasing the popular excitement. All those German soldiers presented the appearance of a Swiss or an Austrian invasion. The outlandish names of the regiments sounded harsh to the ear: Royal-Cravate was at Charenton, Reinach and Diesbach at Sèvres, Nassau at Versailles, Salis-Samade at Issy, the hussars of Bercheny at the Military School; at other stations were Châteaueux, Esterazy, Roemer, &c.

The Bastille, sufficiently defended by its thick walls, had just received a reinforcement of Swiss soldiers. It had ammunition and a monstrous quantity of gunpowder, enough to blow up the town. The cannon, mounted *en batterie* upon the towers ever since the 30th of June, frowned upon Paris, and ready-loaded, thrust their menacing jaws between the battlements.

* "Several of my colleagues told me they had seen printed ones."—Bailly, i., pp. 395, 331.

† Besenval, ii., 359.

CHAPTER VI.

INSURRECTION OF PARIS.

Danger of Paris.—Explosion of Paris, July 12th, 1789.—Inaction of Versailles.—Provocation of the Troops; Paris arms.—The National Assembly applies in vain to the King, July 13th.—The Electors of Paris authorise the People to arm.—Organisation of the Citizen Guard.—Hesitation of the Electors.—The People seize on the Powder Magazines and search for Guns.—Security of the Court.

FROM the 23rd of June to the 12th of July, from the king's menace to the outbreak of the people, there was a strange pause. It was, says an observer of those days, a stormy, heavy, gloomy time, like a feverish, painful dream, full of illusions and anxiety. There were false alarms, false news, and all sorts of fables and inventions. People knew, but nothing for certain. They wished to account for and guess at everything. Profound causes were discovered even in indifferent things. Partial risings began, without any author or project, of their own accord, from a general fund of distrust and sullen anger. The ground was burning, and as if undermined; and, underneath, you might hear already the grumbling of the volcano.

We have seen that, at the very first assembly of the electors, Bonneville had cried: "To arms!"—a strange cry in that assembly of the notables of Paris, and which expired of itself. Many were indignant, others smiled, and one of them said prophetically: "Young man, postpone your motion for a fortnight."

To arms? What, against a ready organised army at the gates? To arms? when that army could so easily famish the city, when famine was already beginning to be felt, and when the crowd was hourly growing larger at the doors of the bakers. The poor of the neighbouring country were flocking to town by every road, wan and ragged, leaning on their long walking-sticks. A mass of twenty thousand beggars, employed at Montmartre, was suspended over the town; and if Paris made a movement, this other army might come down. A few had already attempted to burn and pillage the barrier-houses.

It was almost certain that the court would strike the first

blow. It was necessary for it to compel the king to lay aside his scruples, his hankering for peace, and do away at once with every compromise. To effect this it was necessary to conquer.

Young officers in the hussars, such as Sombreuil and Polignac, went even into the Palais Royal to defy the crowd, and left it sword in hand. Evidently, the court fancied itself too strong ; it wished for violence.*

On Sunday morning, July 12th, nobody at Paris, up to 10 o'clock, had yet heard of Necker's dismissal. The first who spoke of it in the Palais Royal was called an aristocrat, and insulted. But the news is confirmed ; it spreads ; and so does the fury of the people. It was then noon, and the cannon of the Palais Royal was fired. "It is impossible," says the *Ami du Roi*, "to express the gloomy feeling of terror which pervaded every soul on hearing that report." A young man, Camille Desmoulins, rushed from the Café de Foy, leaped upon a table, drew a sword, and showed a pistol :—"To arms !" cried he ; "the Germans in the Champ de Mars will enter Paris to-night, to butcher the inhabitants ! Let us hoist a cockade !" He tore down a leaf from a tree, and stuck it in his hat : everybody followed his example ; and the trees were stripped of their leaves.

"No theatres ! no dancing ! This is a day of mourning !" They go and fetch, from a collection of wax-figures, a bust of Necker ; others, ever at hand to seize the opportunity, add one of the Duke of Orleans. They cover them with crape, and carry them through Paris : the procession, armed with staves, swords, pistols, and hatchets, proceeds first up the Rue Richelieu, then turning the *boulevard*, and the streets St. Martin, Saint-Denis, and Saint-Honoré, arrives at the Place Vendôme. There, in front of the hotels of the farmers of the revenue, a detachment of dragoons was waiting for the people ; it charged them, put them to flight, and destroyed their Necker ; one of the French guards, unarmed, stood his ground, and was killed.

* "Take care," said Doctor Marat, a philanthropic physician, in one of the innumerable pamphlets of the day, "take care, consider what would be the fatal consequences of a seditious movement. If you are so unfortunate as to engage in it, you are treated as rebels ; blood flows," &c. This prudence was conspicuous in many people.

The barriers, which were scarcely finished,—those oppressive little bastilles of the farmers of the revenue,—were attacked everywhere on that same Sunday, by the people, and but ill-defended by the troops, who however killed a few persons. They were burnt during the night.

The court, so near Paris, could not be ignorant of what was passing. It remained motionless, and sent neither orders nor troops. Apparently, it was waiting till the disturbance, increasing to rebellion and war, should give it what the Réveillon riot (too soon appeased) had not been able to give—a specious pretext for dissolving the Assembly. Therefore, it allowed Paris to go on doing mischief at pleasure. It guarded well Versailles, the bridges of Sèvres and Saint-Cloud, cut off all communication, and believed itself sure of being able, if things came to the worst, to famish the city of Paris. As for itself, surrounded by troops, of which two-thirds were German, what had it to fear? Nothing, but to lose France.

The minister of Paris (there was one still) remained at Versailles. The other authorities, the lieutenant of police, Flesselles the provost, and Berthier the intendant, appeared equally inactive. Flesselles, summoned to court, was unable to go there; but it is likely he received instructions.*

Besenal, the commander, without any responsibility, since he could act only by the orders of Broglie, remained idly at the Military School. He durst not make use of the French guards, and kept them confined. But he had several detachments of different corps, and three disposable regiments, one of Swiss, and two of German cavalry. Towards the afternoon, seeing the riot increasing, he posted his Swiss in the *Champs-Élysées* with four pieces of cannon, and drew up his cavalry on the Place Louis XV.

Before evening, before the hour at which people return home on Sunday, the crowd was coming back by the *Champs-Élysées*, and filling the gardens of the Tuileries; they were, for the most part, quiet people taking their walk, families who wanted to return home early “because there had been disturbances.” However, the sight of those German soldiers, drawn up in

* As we learn from the king himself. See his first reply (July 14th) to the National Assembly.

order of battle on the spot, necessarily excited some indignation. Some of the men abused them, and children threw stones.* Then Besenval, fearing at length lest he should be reproached at Versailles with having done nothing, gave the insensate, barbarous order, so like his thoughtlessness, to drive the people forward with the dragoons. They could not move in that dense crowd without trampling on some of them. Their colonel, prince of Lambesc, entered the Tuileries, at first at a slow pace. He was stopped by a barricade of chairs; and being assailed by a shower of bottles and stones, he fired upon the crowd. The women shrieked, and the men tried to shut the gates behind the prince. He had the presence of mind to retire. One man was thrown down and trampled upon; and an old man whilst trying to escape was grievously wounded.

The crowd, rushing out of the Tuileries, with exclamations of horror and indignation, filled Paris with the account of this brutality, of those Germans driving their horses against women and children, and even the old man wounded, so they said, by the hand of the prince himself. Then they run to the gunsmiths and take whatever they find. They hasten also to the Hôtel de Ville to demand arms and ring the alarm-bell. No municipal magistrate was at his post. A few electors, of their own good-will, repaired thither about six in the evening, occupied their reserved seats in the great hall, and tried to calm the multitude. But behind that crowd, already entered, there was another in the square, shouting "Arms!" who believed the town possessed a secret arsenal, and were threatening to burn everything. They overpowered the guard, invaded the hall, pushed down the barriers, and pressed the electors as far as their bureau. Then they related to them a thousand accounts at once of what has just happened. The electors could not refuse the arms of the city guards; but the crowd

* If there had been any pistols fired by the people, or any dragoons wounded, as Besenval has stated, Desèze, his very clever defender, would not have failed to make the most of it in his *Observations sur le rapport d'accusation*. See this report in the *Histoire Parlementaire*, iv., p. 69; and Desèze, at the end of Besenval, ii., p. 369. Who is to be believed, Desèze, who pretends that Besenval gave no orders, or Besenval, who confesses before his judges that he had a strong desire to drive away that crowd, and that he gave orders to charge?—*Hist. Parl.*, ii., p. 89.

had sought, found, and taken them ; and already a man in his shirt, without either shoes or stockings, had taken the place of the sentinel, and with his gun on his shoulder was resolutely mounting guard at the door of the hall.*

The electors declined the responsibility of authorising the insurrection. They only granted the convocation of the districts, and sent a few of their friends "to the posts of the armed citizens, to entreat them, in the name of their native land, to suspend riotous meetings and acts of violence." They had begun that evening in a very serious manner. Some French guards having escaped from their barracks, formed in the Palais Royal, marched against the Germans, and avenged their comrade. They killed three of the cavalry on the *boulevard*, and then marched to the Place Louis XV., which they found evacuated.

On Monday, July 13th, Guillotin the deputy, with two electors, went to Versailles, and entreated the Assembly to "concur in establishing a citizen guard." They gave a terrible description of the crisis of Paris. The Assembly voted two deputations, one to the king, the other to the city. That to the king obtained from him only a cold unsatisfactory answer, and a very strange one when blood was flowing : That he could make no alterations in the measures he had taken, that he was the only judge of their necessities, and that the presence of the deputies at Paris could do no good. The indignant Assembly decreed :—1st, that M. Necker bore with him the regret of the nation ; 2ndly, that it insisted on the removal of the troops ; 3rdly, that not only the ministers, but the king's counsellors, of *whatever rank* they might be, were personally responsible for the present misfortunes ; 4thly, that no power had the right to pronounce the infamous word "bankruptcy." The third article sufficiently designated the queen and the princes, and the last branded them with reproach. The Assembly thus resumed its noble attitude ; unarmed in the middle of the troops, without any other support than the law, threatened that very evening to be dispersed or made away

* *Procès-Verbal des Électeurs*, i., p. 180. Compare Dussaulx, *Œuvre des Sept Jours*. Dussaulx, who wrote some time after, often inverts the order of the facts.

with, it yet bravely branded its enemies on their brow with their true name: *bankrupts*.*

After that vote, the Assembly had but one asylum—the Assembly itself, the room it occupied; beyond that, it had not an inch of ground in the world; not one of its members durst any longer sleep at home. It feared also lest the court should seize upon its archives. On the preceding evening, Sunday, Grégoire, one of the secretaries, had folded up, sealed, and hidden all the papers in a house at Versailles.†

On Monday he presided, *per interim*, and sustained by his courage the weak-hearted, by reminding them of the Tennis-Court, and the words of the Roman: "Fearless amid the crush of worlds." (*Impavidum ferient ruinæ*.)

The sitting was declared permanent, and it continued for seventy-two hours. M. Lafayette, who had contributed not a little to the vigorous decree, was named vice-president.

Meanwhile Paris was in the utmost anxiety. The Faubourg Saint-Honoré expected every moment to see the troops enter. In spite of the efforts of the electors, who ran about all night to make the people lay down their arms, everybody was arming; nobody was disposed to receive the Croats and the Hungarian hussars peaceably, and to carry the keys to the queen. As early as six o'clock on Monday morning, all the bells in every Church sounding alarm, a few electors repaired to the Hôtel-de-Ville, found the crowd already assembled, and sent it off to the different districts. At eight o'clock, seeing the people were in earnest, they affirmed that the citizen guard was authorised, which was not yet the case. The people were perpetually shouting for arms. To which the electors reply: If the town has any, they can only be obtained through the mayor. "Well then," cried they, "send for him!"

The mayor, or provost, Flesselles, was on that day summoned to Versailles by the king, and to the Hôtel-de-Ville by the people. Whether he durst not refuse the summons of the crowd, or thought he could better serve the King at Paris, he went to the Hôtel-de-Ville, was applauded in La Grève, and said in a

* They were going to make payments with a paper-money, without any other guarantee than the signature of an insolvent king. See *ante*, p. 131.

† *Mémoires de Grégoire*, i., p. 382.

fatherly tone : " You shall be satisfied, my friends, I am your father." He declared in the hall that he would preside only by election of the people. Thereupon, a fresh burst of enthusiasm.

Though there was as yet no Parisian army, they were already discussing who should be its general. The American Moreau de Saint-Méry, the president of the electors, pointed to a bust of Lafayette, and that name was received with applause. Others proposed and obtained that the command should be offered to the Duke d'Aumont, who demanded twenty-four hours for reflection, and then refused. The second in command was the Marquis de la Salle, a well-tried soldier, a patriotic writer, full of devotion and probity.

All this was wasting time, and the crowd was in a fever of impatience ; it was in a hurry to be armed, and not without reason. The beggars of Montmartre, throwing away their spades, came down upon the town ; crowds of unknown vagrants were prowling about. The frightful misery of the rural districts had poured, from all sides, their starving populations towards Paris : it was peopled by famine.

That same morning, on a report that there was some corn at Saint-Lazare, the crowd ran thither, and found indeed an enormous quantity of flour, amassed by the good friars, enough to load more than fifty carts which were driven to market. They broke open everything, and ate and drank what was in the house ; however, they carried nothing away ; the first who attempted to do so, was hung by the people themselves.

The prisoners of Saint-Lazare had escaped. Those of La Force who had been imprisoned for debt were set at liberty. The criminals of Le Châtelet wanted to take advantage of the opportunity, and were already breaking down the doors. The gaoler called in a band of the people who were passing ; it entered, fired upon the rebels, and forced them to become orderly again.

The arms of the store-room were carried off, but subsequently all restored.

The electors, being unable to defer the arming any longer, attempted to keep it within limits. They voted, and the provost pronounced : That each of the sixty districts should elect and arm two hundred men, and that all the rest should be dis-

armed. It was an army of *twelve thousand* respectable persons, wonderfully good for police, but very bad for the defence. Paris would have been given up. In the afternoon of the same day, it was decided : That the Parisian police should consist of *forty-eight thousand* men. The cockade was to be of the colours of the city, blue and red.* This decree was confirmed on the same day by all the districts.

A permanent committee is named to watch night and day over public order. It is formed of electors. "Why electors alone?" said a man, stepping forward. "Why, whom would you have named?" "Myself," said he. He was appointed by acclamation.

The provost then ventured to put a very serious question : "To whom shall the oath be taken?" "To the Assembly of the Citizens," exclaimed an elector with energy.

The question of subsistence was as urgent as that of arms. The lieutenant of police, on being summoned by the electors, said that the supplies of corn were entirely beyond his jurisdiction. The town was necessarily obliged to think about obtaining provisions as it could. The roads in every direction were occupied with troops ; it was necessary for the farmers and traders who brought their merchandise to run the risk of passing through military posts and camps of foreigners, who spoke nothing but German. And even supposing they did arrive, they met with a thousand difficulties in re-passing the barriers.

Paris was evidently to die of hunger, or conquer, and to conquer in one day. How was this miracle to be expected? It had the enemy in the very town, in the Bastille, and at the Military School, and every barrier besieged ; the French guards, except a small number, remained in their barracks, and had not yet made up their minds. That the miracle should be wrought by the Parisians quite alone, was almost ridiculous to suppose. They had the reputation of being a gentle, quiet, good-natured sort of population. That such people should become, all of a sudden, an army, and a warlike army, was most unlikely.

This was certainly the opinion of the cool-headed notables

* But as they were also those of the house of Orleans, white, the old colour of France, was added, on the proposal of M. de Lafayette.—See his *Mémoires*, ii., p. 266. "I give you," said he, "a cockade which will go round the world."

and citizens who composed the committee of the town. They wanted to gain time, and not to increase the immense responsibility which weighed already upon them. They had governed Paris ever since the 12th ; was it as electors ? did the electoral power extend so far ? They expected every moment to see the old Marshal de Broglie arrive with all his troops to call them to account. Hence their hesitation, and their conduct so long equivocal ; hence, also, the distrust of the people, who found in them their principal obstacle, and did business without them.

About the middle of the day, the electors who had been sent to Versailles, returned with the king's threatening answer, and the decree of the Assembly.

There was nothing left but war. The envoys had met on the road the green cockade, the colour of the Count d'Artois. They had passed through the cavalry and all the German troops stationed along the road in their white Austrian cloaks.

The situation of things was terrible, unprovided for, almost hopeless, considering the materials. But the courage of the people was immense ; everybody felt his heart waxing hourly stronger within his bosom. They all marched to the Hôtel-de-Ville, to offer themselves for the fight ; there were whole corporations, whole quarters of the town forming legions of volunteers. The company of arquebusiers offered its services. The school of surgery came forward with Boyer at its head ; the Basoche wanted to take the lead and fight in the vanguard : all those young men swore they would die to the last man.

Fight ? But with what ? Without arms, guns, and powder ?

The arsenal was said to be empty. The people however were not so easily satisfied. An invalid and a peruke-maker kept watch in the neighbourhood ; and soon they saw a large quantity of powder brought out, which was going to be embarked for Rouen. They ran to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and obliged the electors to command the powder to be brought. A brave *abbé* undertook the dangerous mission of guarding it and distributing it among the people.*

* This heroic man was the *abbé* Lefebvre d'Ormesson. Nobody rendered a greater service to the Revolution and the city of Paris. He remained forty-eight hours upon that volcano, among madmen fighting for the powder ; they fired at him several times ; a drunken man went and smoked upon the open casks, &c.

Nothing was now wanting but guns. It was well known that there was a large magazine of them in Paris. Berthier, the intendant, had caused thirty thousand to be imported, and had commanded two hundred thousand cartridges to be made. The provost could not possibly be ignorant of these active measures at the intendant's office. Urged to point out the depot, he said the manufactory at Charleville had promised him thirty thousand guns, and moreover, twelve thousand were momentarily expected. To support this falsehood, waggons inscribed with the word *Artillerie* are seen passing through La Grève. These must evidently be the guns. The provost orders the cases to be stowed in the magazines. But he must have French guards to distribute them. The people run to the barracks ; but, as they might have expected, the officers will not give a single soldier. So the electors must distribute the guns themselves. They open the cases ! Judge what they find. Rags ! The fury of the people knows no bounds ; they shout out " Treason ! " Flesselles, not knowing what to say, thinks it best to send them to the Célestin and the Chartreux friars, saying :—" The monks have arms concealed." Another disappointment : the Chartreux friars open and show everything ; and not a gun is found after the closest search.

The electors authorised the districts to manufacture fifty thousand pikes ; they were forged in thirty-six hours ; yet even that dispatch seemed too slow for such a crisis. Everything might be decided in the night. The people, who always knew things when their leaders did not, heard, in the evening, of the grand depot of guns at the Invalides. The deputies of one district went, the same evening, to Besenval, the commandant, and Sombreuil, the governor of the Hôtel. " I will write to Versailles about it," said Besenval, coldly. Accordingly, he gave notice to the Marshal de Broglie. Most strange to say, he received no answer !

This inconceivable silence was doubtless owing, as it has been alleged, to the complete anarchy that reigned in the council : all differing on every point, excepting a very decided one, the dissolution of the National Assembly. It was likewise owing, in my opinion, to the misconception of the court, who, over cunning and subtle, looked upon that great insurrection as the effect of a petty intrigue, believed that the

Palais Royal did everything, and that Orleans paid for all. A puerile explanation. Is it possible to bribe millions of men? Had the duke paid also the insurrections at Lyons and in Dauphiné, which, at that very moment, had loudly refused to pay the taxes? Had he bribed the cities of Brittany, which were rising up in arms, or the soldiers, who, at Rennes, refused to fire upon the citizens?

The prince's effigy had, it is true, been carried in triumph. But the prince himself had come to Versailles to surrender to his enemies, and to protest that he was as much afraid of the riot as anybody, or even more so. He was requested to have the goodness to sleep at the castle. The court, having him under its hand, thought it held fast the fabricator of the whole machination, and felt more at its ease. The old marshal, to whom all the military forces were intrusted at that moment, surrounded himself well with troops, held the king in safety, put Versailles, which nobody thought of, in a state of defence, and looking upon the insurrection of Paris as so much smoke, left it to subside of itself.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TAKING OF THE BASTILLE, JULY 14, 1789.

Difficulty of taking the Bastille.—The Idea of the Attack belongs to the People.—Hatred of the People towards the Bastille.—The Joy of the World on hearing of the taking of the Bastille.—The People carry off the Guns from the Invalides.—The Bastille was in a State of Defence.—Thuriot summons the Bastille to surrender.—The Electors send to it uselessly several Deputations.—Last Attack; Elle, Hulin.—Danger of Delay.—The People believe themselves betrayed; they menace the Provost and the Electors.—The Conquerors at the Hôtel-de-Ville.—How the Bastille surrendered.—Death of the Governor.—Prisoners put to Death.—Prisoners Pardoned.—Clemency of the People.

VERSAILLES, with an organised government, a king, ministers, a general, and an army, was all hesitation, doubt, uncertainty, and in a state of the most complete moral anarchy.

Paris, all commotion, destitute of every legal authority, and in the utmost confusion, attained, on the 14th of July, what is morally the highest degree of order,—unanimity of feeling.

On the 13th, Paris thought only of defending itself ; on the 14th, it attacked.

On the evening of the 13th, some doubt still existed, but none remained in the morning. The evening had been stormy, agitated by a whirlwind of ungovernable frenzy. The morning was still and serene,—an awful calm.

With daylight, one idea dawned upon Paris, and all were illumined with the same ray of hope. A light broke upon every mind, and the same voice thrilled through every heart : “ Go ! and thou shalt take the Bastille ! ” That was impossible, unreasonable, preposterous. And yet everybody believed it. And the thing was done.

The Bastille, though an old fortress, was nevertheless impregnable, unless besieged for several days and with an abundance of artillery. The people had, in that crisis, neither the time nor the means to make a regular siege. Had they done so, the Bastille had no cause for fear, having enough provisions to wait for succour so near at hand, and an immense supply of ammunition. Its walls, ten feet thick at the top of the towers, and thirty or forty at the base, might long laugh at cannon-balls ; and its batteries firing down upon Paris, could, in the meantime, demolish the whole of the Marais and the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. Its towers, pierced with windows and loop-holes, protected by double and triple gratings, enabled the garrison, in full security, to make a dreadful carnage of its assailants.

The attack on the Bastille was by no means reasonable. It was an act of faith.

Nobody proposed ; but all believed, and all acted. Along the streets, the quays, the bridges, and the boulevards, the crowd shouted to the crowd : “ To the Bastille ! The Bastille ! ” And the tolling of the tocsin thundered in every ear : “ *à la Bastille !* ”

Nobody, I repeat, gave the impulse. The orators of the Palais Royal passed the time in drawing up a list of proscription, in condemning the queen to death, as well as Madame de Polignac, Artois, Flesselles the provost, and others. The names of the conquerors of the Bastille do not include one of these makers of motions. The Palais Royal was not the starting-point, neither was it to the Palais Royal that the conquerors brought back the spoils and prisoners.

Still less had the electors, assembled in the Hôtel-de-Ville, the idea of the attack. On the contrary, in order to prevent it, as well as the carnage which the Bastille could so easily make, they went so far as to promise the governor, that if he withdrew his cannon he should not be attacked. The electors did not behave treacherously, though they were accused of having done so ; but they had no faith.

Who had ? They who had also the devotion and the strength to accomplish their faith. Who ? Why, the people, —everybody.

Old men who have had the happiness and the misery to see all that has happened in this unprecedented half century, in which ages seem to be crowded together, declare, that the grand and national achievements of the Republic and the Empire, had nevertheless a partial non-unanimous character, but that the 14th of July alone was the day of the whole people. Then let that grand day remain ever one of the eternal *fêtes* of the human race, not only as having been the first of deliverance, but as having been superlatively the day of concord !

What had happened during that short night, on which nobody slept, for every uncertainty and difference of opinion to disappear with the shades of darkness, and all to have the same thoughts in the morning ?

What took place at the Palais Royal and the Hôtel-de-Ville is well known ; but what would be far more important to know, is, what took place on the domestic hearth of the people.

For there indeed, as we may sufficiently divine by what followed, there every heart summoned the past to its day of judgment, and every one, before a blow was struck, pronounced its irrevocable condemnation. History returned that night a long history of sufferings to the avenging instinct of the people. The souls of fathers who, for so many ages, had suffered and died in silence, descended into their sons, and spoke.

O brave men, you who till then had been so patient, so pacific, who, on that day, were to inflict the heavy blow of Providence, did not the sight of your families, whose only resource is in you, daunt your hearts ? Far from it : gazing once more at your slumbering children, those children for

whom that day was to create a destiny, your expanding minds embraced the free generations arising from their cradle, and felt at that moment the whole battle of the future !

The future and the past both gave the same reply; both cried Advance ! And what is beyond all time,—beyond the future and the past,—immutable right said the same. The immortal sentiment of the Just imparted a temper of adamant to the fluttering heart of man ; it said to him : “ Go in peace ; what matters ? Whatever may happen, I am with thee, in death or victory ! ”

And yet what was the Bastille to them ? The lower orders seldom or never entered it. Justice spoke to them, and, a voice that speaks still louder to the heart, the voice of humanity and mercy ; that still small voice which seems so weak but that overthrows towers, had, for ten years, been shaking the very foundations of the doomed Bastille.

Let the truth be told ; if any one had the glory of causing its downfall, it was that intrepid woman who wrought so long for the deliverance of Latude against all the powers in the world. Royalty refused, and the nation forced it to pardon ; that woman, or that hero, was crowned in a public solemnity. To crown her who had, so to speak, forced open the state-prisons, was already branding them with infamy, devoting them to public execration, and demolishing them in the hearts and desires of men. That woman had shaken the Bastille to its foundations.

From that day, the people of the town and the faubourg, who, in that much-frequented quarter, were ever passing and re-passing in its shadow, never failed to curse it.* And well did it deserve their hatred. There were many other prisons, but this one was the abode of capricious arbitrariness, wanton despotism, and ecclesiastical and bureaucratic inquisition. The court, so devoid of religion in that age, had made the Bastille a dungeon for free minds,—the prison of thought. Less crowded during the reign of Louis XVI., it had become more cruel ; the prisoners were deprived of their walk : more rigorous, and no less unjust : we blush for France, to be

* *Elle écrasait la rue Saint-Antoine*, is Linguet's energetical expression, p. 147. The best known conquerors of the Bastille were, either men of the Faubourg, or of the quarter Saint-Paul, of the Culture-Sainte-Catherine.

obliged to say that the crime of one of the prisoners was to have given a useful secret to our navy ! They were afraid lest he should tell it elsewhere.

The Bastille was known and detested by the whole world. Bastille and tyranny were, in every language, synonymous terms. Every nation, at the news of its destruction, believed it had recovered its liberty.

In Russia, that empire of mystery and silence,—that monstrous Bastille between Europe and Asia, scarcely had the news arrived when you might have seen men of every nation shouting and weeping for joy in the open streets ; they rushed into each other's arms to tell the news : “ Who can help weeping for joy ? *The Bastille is taken.* ” *

On the very morning of that great day, the people had as yet no arms.

The powder they had taken from the arsenal the night before, and put in the Hôtel-de-Ville, was slowly distributed to them, during the night, by only three men. The distribution having ceased for a moment, about two o'clock, the desperate crowd hammered down the doors of the magazine, every blow striking fire on the nails.

No guns !—It was necessary to go and take them, to carry them off from the Invalides ; that was very hazardous. The *Hôtel des Invalides* is, it is true, an open mansion ; but Sombreuil, the governor, a brave old soldier, had received a strong detachment of artillery and some cannon, without counting those he had already. Should these cannon be brought to act, the crowd might be taken in the flank, and easily dispersed by the regiments that Besenval had at the military school.

Would those foreign regiments have refused to act ? In spite of what Besenval says to the contrary, there is reason to doubt it. What is much plainer, is, that being left without orders, he was himself full of hesitation, and appeared paralysed in mind. At five o'clock that same morning, he had received a strange visit ;—a man rushed in ; his countenance was livid, his eyes flashed fire, his language was impetuous and brief, and

* This fact is related by a witness above suspicion, Count de Ségur, ambassador at the court of Russia, who was far from sharing that enthusiasm : “ This madness which I can hardly believe whilst relating it,” &c. Ségur, *Mémoires* iii., p. 508.

his manner audacious. The old coxcomb, who was the most frivolous officer of the *ancien régime*, but brave and collected, gazed at the man, and was struck with admiration. "Baron," said the man, "I come to advise you to make no resistance; the barriers will be burnt to-day;* I am sure of it, but cannot prevent it; neither can you—do not try."

Besnival was not afraid; but he had, nevertheless, felt the shock, and suffered its moral effect. "There was something eloquent in that man," says he, "that struck me; I ought to have had him arrested, and yet I did not." It was the *ancien régime* and the Revolution meeting face to face, and the latter left the former lost in astonishment.

Before nine o'clock thirty thousand men were in front of the Invalides; the Attorney General of the City was at their head: the committee of the electors had not dared to refuse him. Among them were seen a few companies of the French Guards, who had escaped from their barracks, the Clerks of the Basoche, in their old red dresses, and the Curate of Saint-Etienne-da-Mont, who, being named president of the Assembly formed in his church, did not decline the perilous office of heading this armed multitude.

Old Sombreuil acted very adroitly. He showed himself at the gate, said it was true he had guns, but that they had been intrusted to him as a deposit, and that his honour, as a soldier and a gentleman, did not allow him to be a traitor.

This unexpected argument stopped the crowd at once; a proof of the admirable candour of the people in that early age of the Revolution. Sombreuil added, that he had sent a courier to Versailles, and was expecting the answer; backing all this with numerous protestations of attachment and friendship for the Hôtel-de-Ville and the city in general.

The majority was willing to wait. Luckily, there was one man present who was less scrupulous, and prevented the crowd from being so easily mystified.†

* By these words we perceive that at five o'clock, no plan had been formed. The man in question, who was not one of the people, repeated, apparently, the rumours of the Palais Royal.—The Utopians had long been talking of the utility of destroying the Bastille, forming plans, &c.; but the heroic, wild idea of taking it in one day, could be conceived only by the people.

† One of the assembled citizens. *Procès-verbal des électeurs*, i., p. 300.

"There is no time to be lost," said he, "and whose arms are these but the nation's?" Then they leaped into the trenches, and the Hôtel was invaded; twenty-eight thousand muskets were found in the cellars, and carried off, together with twenty pieces of cannon.

All this between nine and eleven o'clock; but, let us hasten to the Bastille.

The governor, De Launey, had been under arms ever since two o'clock in the morning of the 13th; no precaution had been neglected; besides his cannon on the towers, he had others from the arsenal, which he placed in the court, and loaded with grape-shot. He caused six cart-loads of paving-stones, cannon-balls, and old iron, to be carried to the tops of the towers, in order to crush his assailants.* In the bottom loop-holes he had placed twelve large rampart guns, each of which carried a pound and a half of bullets. He kept below his trustiest soldiers, thirty-two Swiss, who had no scruple in firing upon Frenchmen. His eighty-two Invalids were mostly distributed in different posts, far from the gates, upon the towers. He had evacuated the outer buildings which covered the foot of the fortress.

On the 13th, nothing save curses bestowed on the Bastille by passers by.

On the 14th, about midnight, seven shots were fired at the sentinels upon the towers.—Alarm!—The governor ascends with staff, remains half-an-hour, listening to the distant murmuring of the town; finding all quiet he descends.

The next morning many people were about, and, from time to time, young men (from the Palais Royal, or others) were calling out that they must give them arms. They pay no attention to them. They hear and introduce the pacific députation of the Hôtel-de-Ville, which, about ten o'clock, intreats the governor to withdraw his cannon, promising that if he does not fire, he shall not be attacked. He, willingly, accepts, having no orders to fire, and highly delighted, obliges the envoys to breakfast with him.

As they were leaving, a man arrives who speaks in a very different tone.

* *Biographie Michaud*,—article *De Launey*, written from information furnished by his family.

A violent, bold man, unacquainted with human respect, fearless and pitiless, knowing neither obstacle nor delay, and bearing in his breast the passionate genius of the Revolution—he came to summon the Bastille.

Terror accompanied him. The Bastille was afraid; the governor, without knowing why, was troubled and stammered.

That man was Thuriot, a monster of ferocity, one of the race of Danton. We meet with him twice, in the beginning and at the end. And twice his words are deadly; he destroys the Bastille,* and he kills Robespierre.

He was not to pass the bridge; the governor would not allow it; and yet he passed. From the first court, he marches to a second; another refusal; but he passes on, and crosses the second ditch by the draw-bridge. Behold him now in front of the enormous iron gate by which the third court was shut. This seemed a monstrous well rather than a court, its eight towers united together, forming its inside walls. Those frightful gigantic towers did not look towards the court, nor had they a single window. At their feet, in their shadow, was the prisoners' only walk. Lost at the bottom of the pit, and overwhelmed by those enormous masses, he could contemplate only the stern nudity of the walls. On one side only, had been placed a clock, between two figures of captives in chains, as if to fetter time itself, and make the slow succession of hours still more burdensome.

There were the loaded cannon, the garrison, and the staff. Thuriot was daunted by nothing. "Sir," said he to the governor, "I summon you, in the name of the people, in the name of honour, and of our native land, to withdraw your cannon, and surrender the Bastille."—Then, turning towards the garrison, he repeated the same words.

If M. De Launey had been a true soldier, he would not thus have introduced the envoy into the heart of the citadel; still less would he have let him address the garrison. But, it is very necessary to remark, that the officers of the Bastille were mostly officers by favour of the lieutenant of police; even those who had never seen service, wore the cross of Saint

* He destroyed it in two ways. He introduced division and demoralization; and when it was taken, it was he who proposed to have it demolished. He killed Robespierre, by refusing to let him speak, on the 9th thermidor. Thuriot was then president of the Convention.

Louis. All of them, from the governor down to the scullions, had bought their places, and turned them to the best advantage. The governor found means to add every year to his salary of sixty thousand francs, (£2400), a sum quite as large by his rapine. He supplied his establishment at the prisoners' expense; he had reduced their supply of firewood, and made a profit on their wine,* and their miserable furniture. What was most infamous and barbarous, was, that he let out to a gardener the little garden of the Bastille, over a bastion; and, for that miserable profit, he had deprived the prisoners of that walk, as well as of that on the towers; that is to say, of air and light.

That greedy, sordid soul had moreover good reason to be dispirited; he felt he was known; Linguet's terrible memoirs had rendered De Launey infamous throughout Europe. The Bastille was hated; but the governor was personally detested. The furious imprecations of the people, which he heard, he appropriated to himself; and he was full of anxiety and fear.

Thuriot's words acted differently on the Swiss and the French. The Swiss did not understand them; their captain, M. de Flue, was resolved to hold out. But the Staff and the Invalids were much shaken; those old soldiers, in habitual communication with the people of the faubourg, had no desire to fire upon them. Thus the garrison was divided; what will these two parties do? If they cannot agree, will they fire upon each other?

The dispirited governor said, in an apologetical tone, what had just been agreed with the town. He swore, and made the garrison swear, that if they were not attacked they would not begin.

Thuriot did not stop there. He desired to ascend to the top of the towers, to see whether the cannon were really withdrawn. De Launey, who had been all this time repenting of having allowed him already to penetrate so far, refused; but, being pressed by his officers, he ascended with Thuriot.

The cannon were drawn back and masked, but still pointed. The view from that height of a hundred and forty feet was

* The governor had the privilege of ordering in a hundred pieces of wine free of duty. He sold that right to a tavern, and received from it vinegar to give to the prisoners; Linguet, p. 86. See in *La Bastille Dévoilée*, the history of a rich prisoner, whom De Launey used to conduct, at night, to a female, whom he, De Launey, had kept, but would no longer pay.

immense and startling; the streets and openings full of people, and all the garden of the arsenal crowded with armed men. But, on the other side, a black mass was advancing. It was the faubourg Saint Antoine.

The governor turned pale. He grasped Thuriot by the arm: "What have you done? You abuse your privilege as an envoy! You have betrayed me!"

They were both standing on the brink, and De Launey had a sentinel on the tower. Everybody in the Bastille was bound by oath to the governor; in his fortress, he was king and the law. He was still able to avenge himself.

But, on the contrary, it was Thuriot who made him afraid: "Sir," said he, "one word more, and I swear to you that one of us two shall be hurled headlong into the moat!"*

At the same moment, the sentinel approached, as frightened as the governor, and, addressing Thuriot: "Pray, Sir," said he, "show yourself; there is no time to lose; they are marching forward. Not seeing you, they will attack us." He leaned over through the battlements; and the people seeing him alive, and standing boldly upon the tower, uttered deafening shouts of joy and approbation.

Thuriot descended with the governor, again crossed through the court, and addressing the garrison once more: "I am going to give my report," said he; "I hope the people will not refuse to furnish a citizen guard† to keep the Bastille with you."

The people expected to enter the Bastille as soon as Thuriot came forth. When they saw him depart, to make his report to the Hôtel-de-Ville, they took him for a traitor, and threatened him. Their impatience was growing into fury. The crowd seized on three Invalids, and wanted to tear them to pieces. They also seized on a young lady whom they believed to be the governor's daughter, and some wanted to burn her, if he refused to surrender. Others dragged her from them.

What will become of us, said they, if the Bastille be not taken before night? The burly Santerre, a brewer, whom the faubourg had elected its commander, proposed to burn the

* Account of M. Thuriot's conduct, at the end of Dussaulx, *Œuvre des sept jours*, p. 408.—Compare the *Procès-verbal des électeurs*, i., p. 310.

† This bold dignified language is related by the besieged. See their declaration at the end of Dussaulx, p. 449.

place by throwing into it poppy and spikenard oil* that they had seized the night before, and which they could fire with phosphorus. He was sending to fetch the engines.

A blacksmith, an old soldier, without wasting time in idle talk, sets bravely to work. He marches forward, hatchet in hand, leaps upon the roof of a small guard-house, near the first drawbridge, and, under a shower of bullets, coolly plies his hatchet, cuts away, and loosens the chains; down falls the bridge. The crowd rush over it, and enter the court.

The firing began at once from the towers and from the loopholes below. The assailants fell in crowds, and did no harm to the garrison. Of all the shots they fired that day, two took effect: only one of the besieged was killed.

The committee of electors, who saw the wounded already arriving at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and deplored the shedding of blood, would have wished to stop it. There was now but one way of doing so, which was to summon the Bastille, in the name of the city, to surrender, and to allow the citizen-guard to enter. The provost hesitated for a long time; Fauchet insisted;† and other electors entreated him. They went as deputies; but in the fire and smoke, they were not even seen; neither the Bastille nor the people ceased firing. The deputies were in the greatest danger. A second deputation, headed by the city proctor, with a drum and a flag of truce, was perceived from the fortress. The soldiers who were upon the towers hoisted a white flag, and reversed their arms. The people ceased firing, followed the deputation, and entered the court. There, they were welcomed by a furious discharge, which brought down several men by the side of the deputies. Very probably the Swiss who were below with De Launey, paid no attention to the signs made by the Invalids.‡

The rage of the people was inexpressible. Ever since the morning, it had been said that the governor had enticed the crowd into the court to fire upon them; they believed themselves twice deceived, and resolved to perish, or to be revenged

* He himself boasts of this folly. *Procès-verbal des électeurs*, i., p. 385.

† If we may believe him, he had the honour of being the first to propose it. Fauchet, *Discours sur la liberté prononcé le 6 Août 89 à Saint Jacques*, p. 11.

‡ This is the most satisfactory way of reconciling the apparently contradictory declarations of the besieged and of the deputation.

on the traitors. To those who were calling them back, they exclaimed in a transport of frenzy : “ Our bodies at least shall serve to fill the moats ! ” And on they rushed obstinately and nothing daunted, amid a shower of bullets and against those murderous towers, as if, by dying in heaps, they could at length overthrow them.

But then, numbers of generous men, who had hitherto taken no part in the action, beheld, with increased indignation, such an unequal struggle, which was actual assassination. They wanted to lend their assistance. It was no longer possible to hold back the French Guards ; they all sided with the people. They repaired to the commandants nominated by the town, and obliged them to surrender their five cannons. Two columns were formed, one of workmen and citizens, the other of French Guards. The former took for its chief a young man, of heroic stature and strength, named Hullin, a clockmaker of Geneva, but now a servant, being gamekeeper to the Marquis de Confians ; his Hungarian costume as a *chasseur* was doubtless taken for a uniform ; and thus did the livery of servitude guide the people to the combat of liberty. The leader of the other column was Elie, an officer of fortune belonging to the Queen’s regiment, who, changing his private dress for his brilliant uniform, showed himself bravely a conspicuous object to both friends and foes.

Among his soldiers, was one admirable for his valour, youth, and candour, Marceau, one of the glories of France, who remained satisfied with fighting, and claimed no share in the honour of the victory.

Things were not very far advanced when they arrived. Three cart-loads of straw had been pushed forward and set on fire, and the barracks and kitchens had been burnt down. They knew not what else to do. The despair of the people was vented upon the Hôtel-de-Ville. They blamed the provost and the electors, and urged them, in threatening language, to issue formal orders for the siege of the Bastille. But they could never induce them to give those orders.

Several strange singular means were proposed to the electors for taking the fortress. A carpenter advised the erection of a Roman catapult, in wood-work, to hurl stones against the walls. The commanders of the town said it was necessary to attack in a regular way, and open a trench. During this long and

useless debate, a letter at that moment intercepted, was brought in and read ; it was from Besenval to de Launey, commanding him to hold out to the last extremity.

To appreciate the value of time at that momentous crisis, and understand the dread felt at any delay, we must know that there were false alarms every instant. It was supposed that the court, informed at two o'clock of the attack on the Bastille, which had begun at noon, would take that opportunity of pouring down its Swiss and German troops upon Paris. Again, would those at the Military School pass the day in inaction ? That was unlikely. What Besenval says about the little reliance he could place on his troops seems like an excuse. The Swiss showed themselves very firm at the Bastille, as appeared from the carnage ; the German dragoons had, on the 12th, fired several times, and killed some of the French Guards ; the latter had killed several dragoons ; a spirit of mutual hatred ensured fidelity.

In the faubourg Saint Honoré, the paving-stones were dug up, the attack being expected every moment ; La Villette was in the same state, and a regiment really came and occupied it, but too late.

Every appearance of dilatoriness appeared treason. The provost's shuffling conduct caused him to be suspected, as well as the electors. The exasperated crowd perceived it was losing time with them. An old man exclaimed : " Friends, why do we remain with these traitors ? Let us rather hasten to the Bastille ! " They all vanished. The electors, thunder-struck, found themselves alone. One of them goes out, but returns with a livid, spectral countenance : " You have not two minutes to live," says he, " if you remain here. La Grève is filled by a furious crowd. Here they are coming." They did not, however, attempt to fly ; and that saved their lives.

All the fury of the people was now concentrated on the provost. The envoys of the different districts came successively to accuse him of treachery to his face. A part of the electors, finding themselves compromised with the people, by his imprudence and falsehood, turned round and accused him. Others, the good old Dussaulx (the translator of Juvenal), and the intrepid Fauchet endeavoured to defend him, innocent or guilty, and to save him from death. Being forced by the people to remove from their bureau into the grand hall of Saint

Jean, they surrounded him, and Fauchet sat down by his side. The terrors of death were impressed on his countenance. "I saw him," says Dussaulx, "chewing his last mouthful of bread; it stuck in his teeth, and he kept it in his mouth two hours before he could swallow it." Surrounded with papers, letters, and people who came to speak to him on business, and amid shouts of death, he strove hard to reply with affability. The crowds of the Palais Royal and from the district of Saint Roch, being the most inveterate, Fauchet hastened to them to pray for pardon. The district body was assembled in the church of Saint Roch; twice did Fauchet ascend the pulpit, praying, weeping, and uttering the fervent language which his noble heart dictated in that hour of need; his robe, torn to tatters by the bullets of the Bastille,* was eloquent also; it prayed for the people, for the honour of that great day, and that the cradle of liberty might be left pure and undefiled.

The provost and the electors remained in the hall of Saint Jean, between life and death, guns being levelled at them several times. All those who were present, says Dussaulx, were like savages; sometimes they would listen and look on in silence; sometimes a terrible murmur, like distant thunder, arose from the crowd. Many spoke and shouted; but the greater number seemed astounded by the novelty of the sight. The uproar, the exclamations, the news, the alarms, the intercepted letters, the discoveries, true or false, so many secrets revealed, so many men brought before the tribunal, perplexed the mind and reason. One of the electors exclaimed: "Is not doomsday come?" So dizzy, so confounded was the crowd, that they had forgotten everything, even the provost and the Bastille.†

It was half-past five when a shout arose from La Grève. An immense noise, like the growling of distant thunder, resounds nearer and nearer, rushing on with the rapidity and roaring of a tempest. The Bastille is taken.

That hall already so full is at once invaded by a thousand men, and ten thousand pushing behind. The wood-work cracks,

* Fauchet, *Bouche de fer*, No. XVI, Nov. 96, t. iii., p. 244.

† The *Procès verbal* shows, however, that a new deputation was being prepared, and that De la Salle, the commandant, meant at length to take a part in the action.

the benches are thrown down, and the barrier driven upon the bureau, the bureau upon the president.

All were armed in a fantastical manner; some almost naked, others dressed in every colour. One man was borne aloft upon their shoulders and crowned with laurel; it was Elie, with all the spoils and prisoners around him. At the head, amid all that din, which would have drowned a clap of thunder, advanced a young man full of meditation and religion; he carried suspended and pierced with his bayonet a vile, a thrice-accursed object,—the regulations of the Bastille.

The keys too were carried,—those monstrous, vile, ignoble keys, worn out by centuries and the sufferings of men. Chance or Providence directed that they should be intrusted to a man who knew them but too well,—a former prisoner. The National Assembly placed them in its Archives; the old machine of tyrants thus lying beside the laws that had destroyed them. We still keep possession of those keys, in the iron safe of the Archives of France. Oh! would that the same iron-chest might contain the keys of all the Bastilles in the world!

Correctly speaking, the Bastille was not taken; it surrendered. Troubled by a bad conscience it went mad, and lost all presence of mind.

Some wanted to surrender; others went on firing, especially the Swiss, who, for five hours, pointed out, aimed at, and brought down whomsoever they pleased, without any danger or even the chance of being hurt in return. They killed eighty-three men and wounded eighty-eight. Twenty of the slain were poor fathers of families, who left wives and children to die of hunger.

Shame for such cowardly warfare, and the horror of shedding French blood, which but little affected the Swiss, at length caused the Invalids to drop their arms. At four o'clock the subaltern officers begged and prayed De Launey to put an end to this massacre. He knew what he deserved; obliged to die one way or other, he had, for a moment, the horribly ferocious idea of blowing up the citadel: he would have destroyed one-third of Paris. His hundred and thirty-five barrels of gunpowder would have blown the Bastille into the air, and shattered or buried the whole faubourg, all the Marais, and the whole of the quartier of the Arsenal. He seized a match

from a cannon. Two subaltern officers prevented the crime; they crossed their bayonets, and barred his passage to the magazines. He then made a show of killing himself, and seized a knife, which they snatched from him.

He had lost his senses and could give no orders.* When the French Guards had ranged their cannon and fired (according to some), the captain of the Swiss saw plainly that it was necessary to come to terms; he wrote and passed a note,† in which he asked to be allowed to go forth with the honours of war. Refused. Next, that his life should be spared. Hullin and Elie promised it. The difficulty was to perform their promise. To prevent a revenge accumulating for ages, and now incensed by so many murders perpetrated by the Bastille, was beyond the power of man. An authority of an hour's existence, that had but just come from La Grève, and was known only to the two small bands of the vanguard, was not adequate to keep in order the hundred thousand men behind.

The crowd was enraged, blind, drunk with the very sense of their danger. And yet they killed but one man in the fortress. They spared their enemies the Swiss, whom their smock-frocks caused to pass for servants or prisoners; but they ill-treated and wounded their friends the Invalids. They wished to have annihilated the Bastille; they pelted and broke to pieces the two captives of the dial; they ran up to the top of the towers to spurn the cannon; several attacked the stones, and tore their hands in dragging them away. They hastened to the dungeons to deliver the prisoners: two had become mad. One, frightened by the noise, wanted to defend himself, and was quite astonished when those who had battered down his door threw themselves into his arms and bathed him with their tears. Another, whose beard reached to his waist, inquired about the health of Louis XV., believing him to be still reigning. To those who asked him his name, he replied that he was called the Major of Immensity.

The conquerors were not yet at the end of their labours: in

* Even in the morning, according to Thuriot's testimony. See the *Procès-verbal des électeurs*.

† To fetch it, a plank was placed on the moat. The first who ventured, fell; the second (Arné?—or Maillard?) was more lucky and brought back the note.

the Rue Saint Antoine they had to fight a battle of a different kind. On approaching La Grève, they came successfully on crowds of men, who, having been unable to take any part in the fight, wanted at all events to do something, were it merely to massacre the prisoners. One was killed at the Rue des Tournelles, and another on the quay. Women, with dishevelled hair, came rushing forward, and recognizing their husbands among the slain, left them to fly upon their assassins; one of them, foaming at the mouth, ran about asking everybody for a knife.

De Launey was conducted and supported in that extreme danger by two men of extraordinary courage and strength, Hullin, and another. The latter went with him as far as the Petit Antoine, but was there torn from his side by the rush of the crowd. Hullin held fast. To lead his man from that spot to La Grève, which is so near, was more than the twelve labours of Hercules. No longer knowing how to act, and perceiving that they knew De Launey only by his being alone without a hat, he conceived the heroic idea of putting his own upon his head; and, from that moment, he received the blows intended for the governor.* At length, he passed the Arcade Saint Jean; if he could but get him on the flight of steps, and push him towards the stairs, all was over. The crowd saw that very plainly, and accordingly made a desperate onset. The Herculean strength hitherto displayed by Hullin no longer served him here. Stifled by the pressure of the crowd around him, as in the crushing fold of an enormous boa, he lost his footing, was hurled to and fro, and thrown upon the pavement.

* The royalist tradition which aspires to the difficult task of inspiring interest for the least interesting of men, has pretended that De Launey, still more heroic than Hullin, gave him his hat back again, wishing rather to die than expose him. The same tradition attributes the honour of a similar deed to Berthier, the intendant of Paris. Lastly, they relate that the major of the Bastille, on being recognized and defended at La Grève, by one of his former prisoners, whom he had treated with kindness, dismissed him, saying: "You will ruin yourself without saving me." This last story, being authentic, very probably gave rise to the two others. As for De Launey and Berthier, there is nothing in their previous conduct to incline us to believe in the heroisms of their last moments. The silence of Michaud, the biographer, in the article *De Launey*, drawn up from information furnished by that family, sufficiently shows that they did not believe in that tradition.

Twice he regained his feet. The second time he beheld aloft the head of De Launey at the end of a pike.

Another scene was passing in the hall of Saint Jean. The prisoners were there, in great danger of death. The people were especially inveterate towards three Invalids, whom they supposed to have been the cannoneers of the Bastille. One was wounded; De la Salle, the commandant, by incredible efforts, and proclaiming loudly his title of commandant, at last managed to save him; whilst he was leading him out, the two others were dragged out and hung up to the lamp at the corner of the Vannerie, facing the Hôtel-de-Ville.

All this great commotion, which seemed to have caused Flasselles to be forgotten, was nevertheless what caused his destruction. His implacable accusers of the Palais Royal, few in number, but discontented to see the crowd occupied with any other business, kept close to the bureau, menacing him, and summoning him to follow them. At length he yielded: whether the long expectation of death appeared to him worse than death itself, or that he hoped to escape in the universal pre-occupation about the great event of the day. "Well! gentlemen," said he, "let us go to the Palais Royal." He had not reached the quay before a young man shot him through the head with a pistol bullet.

The dense multitude crowding the hall did not wish for bloodshed; according to an eye-witness, they were stupefied on beholding it. They stared gaping at that strange, prodigious, grotesque, and maddening spectacle. Arms of the middle ages and of every age were mingled together; centuries had come back again. Elie, standing on a table, with a helmet on his brow, and a sword hacked in three places, in his hand, seemed a Roman warrior. He was entirely surrounded by prisoners, and pleading for them. The French Guards demanded the pardon of the prisoners as their reward.

At that moment, a man, followed by his wife, is brought or rather carried in; it was the Prince de Montbarrey, an ancient minister, arrested at the barrier. The lady fainted; her husband was thrown upon the bureau, held down by the arms of twelve men, and bent double. The poor man, in that strange posture, explained that he had not been minister for a long time, and that his son had taken a prominent part in the revo-

lution of his province. De la Salle, the commandant, spoke for him, and exposed himself to great danger. Meanwhile, the people relented a little, and for a moment let go their hold. De la Salle, a very powerful man, caught him up, and carried him off. This trial of strength pleased the people, and was received with applause.

At the same moment, the brave and excellent Elie found means to put an end at once to every intention of trial or condemnation. He perceived the children of the Bastille, and began to shout : " Pardon ! for the children, pardon ! "

*Then you might have seen sunburnt faces and hands blackened with gunpowder, washed with big tears, falling like heavy drops of rain after a shower. Justice and vengeance were thought of no longer. The tribunal was broken up ; for Elie had conquered the conquerors of the Bastille. They made the prisoners swear fidelity to the nation, and led them away ; the Invalids marched off in peace to their Hôtel ; the French Guards took charge of the Swiss, placed them in safety within their ranks, conducting them to their own barracks, and gave them lodging and food.

What was most admirable, the widows showed themselves equally magnanimous. Though needy, and burdened with children, they were unwilling to receive alone a small sum allotted to them ; they shared it with the widow of a poor Invalid who had prevented the Bastille from being blown up, but was killed by mistake. The wife of the besieged was thus adopted, as it were, by those of the besiegers.

BOOK II.

JULY TO OCTOBER, 1789.

CHAPTER I.

THE HOLLOW TRUCE.

Versailles, on the 14th of July.—The King at the Assembly, July 15th.—Paris in Mourning and Misery.—Deputation of the Assembly to the City of Paris, July 15th.—Hollow Truce.—The King goes to Paris on the 17th of July.—First Emigration : Artois, Condé, Polignac, &c.—The King's isolated Position.

THE Assembly passed the whole of the 14th of July in a state of two-fold trepidation, between the violent measures of the Court, the fury of Paris, and the chances of an insurrection, which, if unsuccessful, would stifle liberty. They listened to every rumour, and with their ears anxiously open imagined they heard the faint thunder of a distant cannonade. That moment might be their last ; several members wished the bases of the constitution to be hastily established, that the Assembly, if it was to be dispersed and destroyed, should leave that testamentary evidence behind, as a beacon for the opponents of tyranny.

The Court was preparing the attack, and little was wanting for its execution. At two o'clock, Berthier, the intendant, was still at the military school, giving orders for the details of the attack. Foulon, his father-in-law, the under-minister of war, was at Versailles, completing the preparations. Paris was to be attacked, that night, on seven points simultaneously.* The council was discussing the list of the deputies who were

* Bailly, i., pp. 391, 392.

to be carried off that evening; one was proscribed, another excepted; M. de Breteuil defended the innocence of Bailly. Meanwhile the queen and Madame de Polignac went into the *Orangerie* to encourage the troops and to order wine to be given to the soldiers, who were dancing about and singing roundelays. To complete the general intoxication, this lovely creature conducted the officers to her apartments, excited them with liqueurs, with sweet words and glances. Those madmen, once let loose, would have made a fearful night. Letters were intercepted, wherein they had written: "We are marching against the enemy." What enemy? The law and France.

But see! a cloud of dust is rising in the *Avenue de Paris*; it is a body of cavalry, with Prince de Lambesc and all his officers flying before the people of Paris. But he meets with those of Versailles: if they had not been afraid of wounding the others, they would have fired upon him.

De Noailles arrives, saying: "The Bastille is taken." De Wimpfen arrives: "The governor is killed; he saw the deed, and was nearly treated in the same way." At last, two envoys of the electors come and acquaint the Assembly with the frightful state of Paris. The Assembly is furious, and invokes against the Court and the ministers the vengeance of God and men. "Heads!" cried Mirabeau; "We must have De Broglie's head!"*

A deputation of the Assembly waits upon the king, but it can get from him only two equivocal expressions: he sends officers to take the command of the local militia, and orders the troops in the Champ-de-Mars to fall back. A movement very well devised for the general attack.

The Assembly is furious and clamorous; it sends a second deputation. "The king is heart-broken, but he can do no more."

Louis XVI., whose weakness has been so often deplored, here made a show of deplorable firmness. Berthier had come to stay with him; he was in his closet and comforted him,† telling him there was no great harm done. In the present troubled state of Paris, there was still every chance of the

* Ferrières, i., p. 132.

† *Rapport d'Accusation, Hist. Parl.*, iv., p. 83.

grand attack in the evening. However, they soon discovered that the town was on its guard. It had already placed cannon on Montmartre, which covered La Villette, and kept Saint-Denis in check.

Amid the contradictory reports, the king gave no orders; and, faithful to his usual habits, retired to rest at an early hour. The Duke de Liancourt, whose duties gave him the privilege of entering at any hour, even in the night, could not see him perish thus in his apathy and ignorance. He entered, and awoke him. He loved the king, and wanted to save him. He told him the extent of his danger, the importance of the movement, its irresistible force; that he ought to meet it, get the start of the Duke of Orleans, and secure the friendship of the Assembly. Louis XVI., half asleep (and who was never entirely awake): "What then," said he, "is it a revolt?" "Sire, it is a Revolution."

The king concealed nothing from the queen; so everything was known in the apartment of the Count d'Artois. His followers were much alarmed; royalty might save itself at their expense. One of them, who knew the prince, and that fear was the weak point in his character, secured him by saying that he was proscribed at the Palais Royal, like Flesselles and De Launey, and that he might tranquillise every mind by uniting with the king in the popular measure dictated by necessity. The same man, who was a deputy, ran to the Assembly (it was then midnight); he there found the worthy Bailly, who durst not retire to rest, and asked him, in the name of the prince, for a speech that the king might read on the morrow.

There was one man at Versailles who grieved as much as any. I mean the Duke of Orleans. On the 12th of July, his effigy had been carried in triumph, and then brutally broken to pieces. There the matter rested; nobody had cared about it. On the 13th, a few had spoken of the election of a lieutenant-general, but the crowd seemed deaf, and either did not, or would not, hear. On the morning of the 14th, Madame de Genlis took the daring and incredible step of sending her Pamela with a lackey in red livery into the middle of the riot.*

* Madame Lebrun, *Souvenirs*, i., p. 189.

Somebody exclaimed: "Why it is not the queen!" And those words died away. All their petty intrigues were swamped in that immense commotion, every paltry interest was smothered in the excitement of that sacred day.

The poor Duke of Orleans went on the morning of the 15th to the council at the castle. But he had to stay at the door. He waited; then wrote; not to demand the lieutenancy-general, not to offer his mediation (as had been agreed between him, Mirabeau, and a few others), but to assure the king, as a good and loyal subject, that if matters grew worse, he would go over to England.

He did not stir all day from the Assembly, or from Versailles, and went to the castle in the evening;* he thus made good an *alibi* against every accusation of being an accomplice, and washed his hands of the taking of the Bastille. Mirabeau was furious, and left him from that moment. He said (I soften the expression): "He is an eunuch for crime; he would, but cannot!"

Whilst the duke was being kept waiting like a petitioner at the council door, Sillery-Genlis, his warm partisan, was striving to avenge him; he read, and caused to be adopted, an insidious project of address, calculated to diminish the effect of the king's visit, deprive it of the merit of being spontaneous, and chill, beforehand, every heart: "Come, sire, your majesty will see the consternation of the Assembly, but you will be perhaps astonished at its calmness," &c. And, at the same time, he announced that loads of flour going to Paris had been stopped at Sèvres. "What if this news reached the capital!"

To which, Mirabeau, addressing the deputies whom they were sending to the king, added these alarming words: "Go, and tell the king that the foreign hordes by which we are invested, were visited yesterday by the princes and princesses, by his male and female favourites, who lavished on them their caresses, presents, and exhortations. Tell him that all night long, those foreign satellites, gorged with wine and gold, have predicted, in their impious songs, the servitude of France, and that their brutal vows have invoked the destruction of the National Assembly. Tell him that in his very palace, his

* Ferrières, i., p. 135. Droz, ii., p. 342

courtiers danced to the sounds of that barbarous music, and that such was the prelude to the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Tell him that king Henry, whose memory is adored by the universe, that ancestor of his whom he affected to wish to take as his model, ordered provisions to be sent into revolted Paris, which he was besieging in person ; whilst his ferocious counsellors have driven back the corn which commerce was bringing to his starving but faithful Paris."

As the deputation was departing, the king arrives. He enters without his guards, accompanied only by his brothers. He advances a few paces into the hall, and, standing in front of the Assembly, announces that he has given orders to the troops to remove from *Paris and Versailles*, and he engages the Assembly to give this information to Paris. A sad confession that his own word will obtain little credit unless the Assembly affirmed that the king has not told a lie ! He added, however, more nobly and adroitly : " People have dared to spread a report that your persons are not in safety. Can it be necessary to reassure you against such wicked rumours, already belied by my well-known character ? Well then, I, who am but one with the nation, I come to intrust myself to you ! "

To remove the troops from Paris and Versailles, without stating any distance, was yet but an equivocal, uncertain promise, that gave but little comfort. But the Assembly were generally so alarmed at the obscure immensity opening before them, so stupefied by the victory of Paris, and had so much need of order, that they showed themselves credulous, enthusiastic for the king, even so far as to forget what they owed to themselves.

They all rushed round him and followed him. He returned on foot. The Assembly and the people crowded about him to suffocation ; the king, who was very corpulent, was quite exhausted in crossing the Place d'Armes in such scorching weather ; deputies, among whom was the Duke of Orleans, formed a circle around him. On his arrival, the Swiss band played the air : "*Où peut on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille ?*" A family too limited in number : the people formed no part of it ; the gates being shut against them. The king gave orders to open them again. However, he declined to receive the deputies who wished to see him once more ; he

was going to his chapel to return thanks to God.* The queen appeared in the balcony with her children, and those of the Count d'Artois, with all the appearance of great delight, and hardly knowing what to think of an enthusiasm so ill deserved.

Versailles was overcome with joy. Paris, in spite of its victory, was still in alarm and affliction. It was burying its dead; many of them had left families without resource. Such as had no family received the last duties from their companions. They had placed a hat beside one of the dead, and said to passengers: "Sir, something for this poor fellow who was killed for the nation! Madam, it is for this poor fellow who was killed for the nation!"† An humble and simple funeral oration for men whose death gave life to France.

Everybody was guarding Paris; nobody was working. There was no work; food was scarce and dear. The Hôtel-de-Ville maintained that Paris had provision enough for a fortnight; but it had not enough for three days. It was necessary to order a tax for the subsistence of the poor. The supplies of flour had been stopped at Sèvres and Saint-Denis. Two fresh regiments arrived while they were promising to send back the troops. The hussars came and reconnoitered the barriers; and a report was spread that they had attempted to surprise the Bastille. At length the alarm was so great, that, at two o'clock, the electors could not refuse the people an order to unpave Paris.

At two o'clock precisely, a man arrives breathless and almost fainting.‡ He had run all the way from Sèvres, where the troops wanted to stop him. "It is all over; the Revolution is finished; the king came into the Assembly, and said: 'I trust myself to you.' A hundred deputies are now on their road from Versailles, sent by the Assembly to the city of Paris."

Those deputies had immediately set forth; Bailly would not dine. The electors had barely the time to run to meet them, just as they were, in disorder, not having been to bed for several nights. They wanted to fire the cannon; but they were still ranged *en batterie*, and could not be got ready.

* *Point du Jour*, No. 35, t. i., p. 207.

† *Lettres écrites de France à un Ami*, p. 29, quoted in Dussaulx's Notes, p. 333.

‡ *Procès-verbal des Électeurs, rédigé par Duveyrier*, i., p. 431.

There was no need of them to solemnise the *fête*. Paris was grand enough with its sun of July, its commotion, and all that population in arms. The hundred deputies, preceded by the French Guards, the Swiss, the officers of the city militia, and by the deputies of the electors, marched up the Rue Saint Honoré to the sound of trumpets. Every arm was stretched towards them, and every heart leaped with joy. From every window were showered flowers, blessings, and tears.

The National Assembly and the people of Paris, the oath of the Jeu-de-Paume and the taking of the Bastille; victory and victory, kissed each other.

Several deputies kissed and wept over the flags of the French Guards: "Flags of our native land!" cried they, "flags of liberty!"

On their arrival at the Hôtel-de-Ville, Lafayette, Bailly, the archbishop of Paris, Sieyès, and Clermont-Tonnerre were made to sit at the bureau. Lafayette spoke coolly and prudently; next, Lally Tollendal with his Irish impetuosity and easy tears. It was at that same Grève that Lally's father, thirty years before, had been gagged and beheaded by the *ancien régime*; his speech, full of emotion, was nothing but a sort of amnesty for the *ancien régime*, an amnesty certainly too premature, whilst it still kept Paris surrounded by troops.

Emotion nevertheless took effect also in the citizen assembly of the Hôtel-de-Ville. "The fattest of tender-hearted men," as Lally was called, was crowned with flowers, and led, or rather carried, to the window, and shown to the crowd. Resisting as much as he could, he put his crown on the head of Bailly, the first president the National Assembly had. Bailly likewise refused; but it was held and fastened on his head by the hand of the archbishop of Paris. A strange and whimsical spectacle, which shewed, in a strong light, the false position of the parties. Here was the president of the Jeu-de-Paume, crowned by the prelate, who advised the *coup d'état*, and forced Paris to conquer. The contradiction was so little perceived, that the archbishop did not fear to propose a *Te Deum*, and everybody followed him to Notre Dame. It was rather a *De Profundis* that he first owed to those whose deaths he had occasioned.

Notwithstanding the general emotion, the people remained

in their senses. They did not tamely allow their victory to be meddled with ; that, we must say, was neither fair nor useful ; that victory was not yet sufficiently complete to sacrifice and forget it so soon. Its moral effect was immense, but its material result still feeble and uncertain. Even in the Rue Saint Honoré, the citizen guard (then it was all the people) brought before the deputies, with military music, that French Guardsman who had been the first to arrest the governor of the Bastille ; he was led in triumph in De Launey's chariot, crowned with laurel, and wearing the cross of Saint Louis, which the people had snatched from the gaoler to put upon his conqueror. He was unwilling to keep it ; however, before he gave it back, in presence of the deputies, he adorned himself with it, proudly showing it upon his breast.* The crowd applauded, and so did the deputies, thus sanctioning with their approbation what had been done the day before.

Another incident was still clearer. Among the speeches made at the Hôtel-de-Ville, M. De Liancourt, a good-natured, but inconsiderate man, said that the king willingly *pardoned* the French Guards. Several of them, then present, stepped forward, and one of them exclaimed : " We need no pardon. In serving the nation, we serve the king ; the intentions which he displays to-day prove sufficiently to France that we alone have been faithful to the king and the country."

Bailly is proclaimed mayor, and Lafayette commandant of the citizen militia. They depart for the Te Deum. The archbishop gave his arm to that brave *abbé* Lefebvre who had guarded and distributed the gunpowder, who left that den for the first time, and was still quite black. Bailly was, in like manner, conducted by Hullin, applauded by the crowd, pressed, and almost stifled. Four fusileers followed him ; but, notwithstanding the rejoicings of that day and the unexpected honour of his new position, he could not help thinking " that he looked

* * Camille Desmoulins, so amusing here and everywhere else, triumphed also in his manner : " I marched with my sword drawn," &c., (*Correspondance*, p. 28, 1836). He took a fine gun with a bayonet and a pair of pistols from the Invalids ; if he did not make use of them, it is because unfortunately the Bastille was taken so quickly ! He ran there, but it was too late. Several go so far as to say, that it was he who caused the Revolution (p. 33) ; for his part, he is too modest to believe it.

like a man being led to prison." Had he been able to foresee better, he would have said : to death !

What was that *Te Deum*, but a falsehood ? Who could believe that the archbishop thanked God heartily for the taking of the Bastille ? Nothing had changed, neither men nor principles. The court was still the court, the enemy ever the enemy. What had been done was done. Neither the National Assembly nor the electors of Paris, with all their omnipotence, could alter the past. On the 14th of July, there had been a person conquered, who was the king, and the conqueror was the people. How then were they to undo that, cause that not to be, blot out history, change the reality of actual events, and dupe the king and the people, in such a manner that the former should consider himself happy in being beaten, and the latter, without distrust, should give themselves up again into the hands of a master so cruelly provoked ?

Mounier, whilst relating on the 16th, in the National Assembly, the visit of the hundred deputies to the city of Paris, made the strange proposal (resumed on the morrow and voted at the *Hôtel-de-Ville*) to raise a statue to Louis XVI. on the site of the demolished Bastille. A statue for a defeat ! that was something new and original. The ridicule of it was apparent. Who was to be thus deceived ? Was the victory indeed to be conjured away by thus allowing the vanquished to triumph ?

The obstinacy of the king throughout the whole of the 14th of July, made the most simple perceive that his conduct on the 15th was by no means spontaneous. At the very moment the Assembly was conducting him back to the castle, amid this enthusiasm, feigned or real, a woman fell at his knees, and was not afraid to say : " Oh ! Sire, are you really sincere ? Will they not make you change ? "

The population of Paris was full of gloomy ideas. They could not believe that with forty thousand men about Versailles, the court would make no attempt. They believed the king's conduct to be only intended to lull them into security, in order to attack with greater advantage. They distrusted the electors ; two of the latter, deputed to Versailles on the 15th, were brought back, menaced as traitors, and in great danger. The French Guards were afraid of some ambush in their barracks, and refused to return to them. The people persisted in believing,

that if the court durst not fight, it would be revenged by some dark plot, that it might have somewhere a mine to blow Paris into the air.

Fear was not ridiculous, but confidence most certainly was. Why should they have felt secure? The troops, in spite of the promise, did not withdraw. The baron de Falckenheim, who commanded at Saint-Denis, said he had no orders. Two of his officers who had come to reconnoitre, had been arrested at the barrier. What was still more serious, was, that the lieutenant of police had given in his resignation. Berthier the intendant had absconded, and with him, all the persons charged with the administration of provisions. In a day or two, perhaps, the market would be without corn, and the people would go to the Hôtel-de-Ville to demand bread and the heads of the magistrates. The electors sent several of their body to fetch corn from Senlis, Vernon, and even from Havre.

Paris was waiting for the king. It thought that if he had spoken candidly and from his heart, he would leave his Versailles and his wicked advisers, and cast himself into the arms of the people. Nothing would have been better timed, or have had a greater effect on the 15th:—he should have departed for Paris, on leaving the Assembly, and have trusted himself, not in words only, but truly, and with his person, boldly entering the crowd, and mingling with that armed population. The emotion, still so great, would have turned entirely in his favour.

That is what the people expected, what they believed and talked of. They said so at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and repeated it in the streets. The king hesitated, consulted, postponed for one day, and all was lost.

Where did he pass that irreparable day? From the evening of the 15th to the morning of the 16th, he was still shut up with those same ministers, whose audacious folly had filled Paris with bloodshed, and shaken the throne for ever. At that council, the queen wanted to fly, carry off the king, put him at the head of the troops, and begin a civil war. But, were the troops very sure? What would happen if war broke out in the army itself, between the French soldiers and the foreign mercenaries? Was it not better to temporise, gain time, and amuse the people? Louis XVI., between these two opinions,

had none of his own,—no will;* he was ready to follow either indifferently. The majority of the council were for the latter opinion ; so the king remained.

A mayor and a commandant of Paris appointed by the electors without the king's consent, those places accepted by men of such importance as Bailly and Lafayette, and their nominations confirmed by the Assembly, without asking the king for any permission, was no longer an insurrection, but a well and duly organized Revolution. Lafayette, "not doubting but all the *communes* would be willing to intrust their defence to armed citizens," proposed to call the citizen militia *National Guards* (a name already invented by Sieyès). This name seemed to generalize, and extend the arming of Paris to all the kingdom, even as the blue and red cockade of the city, augmented with white, the old French colours, became that of all France.

If the king remained at Versailles, if he delayed, he risked Paris. Its attitude was becoming more hostile every moment. On the districts being engaged to join their deputies to those of the Hôtel-de-Ville, in order to go and thank the king, several replied, "There was no occasion yet to return thanks."

It was not till the evening of the 16th, that Bailly having happened to see Vicq d'Azir, the queen's physician, gave him notice that the city of Paris wished for and expected the king. The king promised to go, and the same evening wrote to M. Necker to engage him to return.

On the 17th, the king departed at nine o'clock, very serious, melancholy, and pale ; he had heard mass, taken the communion, and given to *Monsieur* his nomination as lieutenant-general, in case he was killed or detained prisoner ; the queen, in his absence, wrote, with a trembling hand, the speech she would go and pronounce at the Assembly, if the king should be detained.

Without guards, but surrounded by three or four hundred deputies, he arrived at the (city) barrier at three o'clock. The mayor, on presenting him the keys, said : "These are the same keys that were presented to Henri IV. ; he had re-

* The *Histoire Parlementaire* is wrong in quoting a pretended letter from Louis XVI. to the Count d'Artois (v. ii., p. 101), an apocryphal and ridiculous letter, like most of those published by Miss Williams, in the *Correspondance inédite*, so well criticised and condemned by MM. Barbier and Beauchot.

conquered his people, now the people have re-conquered their king."

Those last words, so true and so strong, the full meaning of which was not perceived, even by Bailly, were enthusiastically applauded.

The Place Louis XV. presented a circle of troops, with the French Guards, drawn up in a square battalion, in the centre. The battalion opened and formed into file, displaying cannon in the midst (perhaps those of the Bastille). It put itself at the head of the procession, dragging its cannon after it—and the king followed.

In front of the king's carriage rode Lafayette, the commandant, in a private dress, sword in hand, with the cockade and plume in his hat. Everything was obedient to his slightest gesture. There was complete order and silence too; not one cry of *Vive le Roi*.^{*} Now and then, they cried *Vive la Nation*. From the *Point-du-Jour* to Paris, and from the barrier to the Hôtel-de-Ville, there were two hundred thousand men under arms, more than thirty thousand guns, fifty thousand pikes, and, for the others, lances, sabres, swords, pitchforks, and scythes. No uniforms, but two regular lines, throughout that immense extent, of three, and sometimes of four or five men deep.

A formidable apparition of the nation in arms! The king could not misunderstand it; it was not a party. Amid so many weapons and so many different dresses, there was the same soul and the same silence!

Everybody was there; all had wanted to come; nobody was missing at that solemn review. Even ladies were seen armed beside their husbands, and girls with their fathers. A woman figured among the conquerors of the Bastille.

Monks, believing also that they were men and citizens, had come to take their part in that grand crusade. The Mathurins were in their ranks under the banner of their order, now become

^{*} Save one mishap; one gun went off, and a woman was killed. There was no bad intention towards the king. Everybody was royalist, both the Assembly and the people: even Marat was till 1791. In an unpublished letter of Robespierre's (which M. De George communicated to me at Arras), he seems to believe in the good faith of Louis XVI., whose visit to the city of Paris is therein related, (23rd of July, 1789).

the standard of the district of that name. Capucins were there shouldering the sword or the musket. The *ladies of the Place-Maubert* had put the revolution of Paris under the protection of Saint Geneviève, and offered on the preceding evening a picture wherein the saint was encouraging the destroying angel to overthrow the Bastille, which was seen falling to pieces with broken crowns and sceptres.

Two men only were applauded, Bailly and Lafayette, and no others. The deputies marched surrounding the king's carriage, with sorrowful, uneasy looks; there was something gloomy about that procession. Those strange looking weapons, those pitch-forks and scythes, were not pleasing to the eye. Those cannon reclining so quietly in the streets, silent, and bedecked with flowers, seemed as though they would awake. Above all the apparent signs of peace hovered a conspicuous and significant image of war,—the tattered flag of the Bastille.

The king alights, and Bailly presents to him the new cockade of the colours of the city, which had become those of France. He begs of him to accept "that distinguishing symbol of Frenchmen." The king put it in his hat, and, separated from his suite by the crowd, ascended the gloomy stairs of the Hôtel-de-Ville. Over head, swords placed crosswise formed a canopy of steel; a singular honour, borrowed from the masonic customs, which seemed to have a double meaning, and might lead to suppose that the king was passing under the yoke.

There was no intention to cause either humiliation or displeasure. On the contrary, he was received with extraordinary emotion. The great hall, crowded with a confused mass of notables and men of every class, presented a strange spectacle; those in the middle remained kneeling, in order not to deprive the others of the happiness of seeing the king, and all had their hands raised towards the throne, and their eyes full of tears.

Bailly, in his speech, had pronounced the word *alliance* between the king and the people. The president of the electors, Moreau de Saint Méry (he who had been chairman during the great days, and given three thousand orders in thirty hours) ventured a word that seemed to engage the king: "You *come to promise* your subjects that the authors of those disastrous councils shall surround you no longer, and that Virtue, too long exiled, shall remain your support." Virtue meant Necker.

The king, from timidity or prudence, said nothing. The city proctor then made a proposal to raise a statue on the Place de la Bastille; it was voted unanimously.

Next, Lally, always eloquent, only too tender-hearted and lachrymose, avowed the king's *chagrin*, and the need he had of *consolation*. This was showing him as conquered, instead of associating him with the victory of the people over the ministers who were departing. "Well, citizens, are you satisfied! Behold the king," &c. That *Behold*, thrice repeated, seemed like a sad parody of *Ecce Homo*.

Those who had noticed that similitude found it exact and complete, when Bailly showed the king at the window of the Hôtel-de-Ville, with the cockade in his hat. He remained there a quarter of an hour, serious and silent. On his departure it was intimated to him, in a whisper; that he ought to say something himself. But all they could get from him was the ratification of the citizen guard, the mayor, and the commandant, and the very laconic sentence: "You may always rely on my affection."

The electors were satisfied, but not so the people. They had imagined that the king, rid of his bad advisers, had come to fraternize with the city of Paris. But, what! not one word, not one gesture! Nevertheless, the crowd applauded on his return; they seemed to desire to give vent at length to their long restrained feelings. Every weapon was reversed in sign of peace. They shouted *Vive le Roi*, and he was carried to his carriage. A market-woman flung her arms round his neck. Men with bottles stepped his horses, poured out wine for his coachman and valets, and drank with them the health of the king. He smiled, but still said nothing. The least kind word, uttered at that moment, would have been re-echoed and celebrated with immense effect.

It was past nine in the evening when he returned to the castle. On the staircase he found the queen and his children in tears, who came and threw themselves into his arms. Had the king then incurred some alarming danger in going to visit his people? Was his people his enemy? Why what more would they have done for a king set at liberty; for John or Francis I., returning from London or Madrid?

On the same day, Friday, the 17th, as if to protest that the

king neither said nor did anything at Paris but by force and constraint, his brother the Count d'Artois, the Condés, the Contis, the Polignacs, Vaudreuil, Broglie, Lambesc, and others, absconded from France. It was no easy matter. They found everywhere their names held in detestation, and the people rising against them. The Polignacs and Vaudreuil were only able to escape by declaiming along their road against Vaudreuil and Polignac.

The conspiracy of the court, aggravated with a thousand popular accounts, both strange and horrible, had seized upon every imagination, and rendered them incurably suspicious and distrustful. Versailles, excited at least as much as Paris, watched the castle night and day as the centre of treason. That immense palace seemed a desert. Many durst no longer enter it. The north wing, appropriated to the Condés, was almost empty; the south wing, that of the Count d'Artois, and the seven vast apartments of the ladies Polignac were shut up for ever. Several of the king's servants would have liked to forsake their master. They were beginning to entertain strange ideas about him.

For three days, says Besenval, the king had scarcely anybody about him but M. de Montmorin and myself. On the 19th, every minister being absent, I had entered the king's apartment to ask him to sign an order to have horses given to a colonel who was returning. As I was presenting that order a footman placed himself between the king and me, in order to see what he was writing. The king turned round, perceived the insolent fellow, and snatched up the tongs. I prevented him from following that impulse of very natural indignation; he clasped my hand to thank me, and I perceived tears in his eyes.

CHAPTER II.

POPULAR JUDGMENTS.

No Power inspires Confidence.—The Judiciary Power has lost Confidence.—The Breton Club.—Advocates, the Basoche.—Danton and Camille Desmoulins.—Barbarity of the Laws, and of the Punishments.—Judgments of the Palais Royal.—La Grève and Famine.—Death of Foulon and Berthier, July 22, 1789.

ROYALTY remains alone. The privileged class go into exile or submit ; they declare they will henceforth vote in the National Assembly and be subject to the majority. Being isolated and laid bare, royalty appears what it had been fundamentally for a long time : a nonentity.

That nonentity was the ancient faith of France ; and that faith deceived now causes her distrust and incredulity ; it makes her excessively uneasy and suspicious. To have believed and loved, and to have been for a century always deceived in that love, is enough to make her no longer believe in anything.

Where will faith be now ? At that question, they experience a feeling of terror and solitude, like Louis XVI. himself in the corner of his lonely palace. There will no longer be faith in any mortal power.

The legislative power itself, that Assembly beloved by France, is now so unfortunate as to have absorbed its enemies, five or six hundred nobles and priests, and to contain them in its bosom. Another evil is, that it has conquered too much ; it will now be the authority, the government, the king—when a king is no longer possible.

The electoral power, which likewise found itself obliged to govern, feels itself expiring at the end of a few days, and entreats the districts to create its successor. During the cannonade of the Bastille, it had shuddered and doubted. Men of little faith ! But perfidious ? No. That *bourgeoisie* of '89, imbued with the philosophy of that grand age, was certainly less egotistical than our own. It was wavering and uncertain, bold in principle, but timid in application ; it had been so long in bondage !

It is the virtue of the judiciary power, when it remains entire and strong, to supply every other ; but itself is supplied by none. It was the mainstay and the resource of our ancient France, in her most terrible moments. In the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, it sat immutable and firm, so that the country, almost lost in the tempest, recovered and found itself still in the inviolable sanctuary of civil justice.

Well! even that power is shattered. Shattered by its inconsistency and contradictions. Servile and bold at once, for the king and against the king, for the pope and against the pope, the defender of the law and the champion of privilege, it speaks of liberty and resists for a century every liberal progress. It also, and as much as the king, deceived the hope of the people. What joy, what enthusiasm, when the parliament returned from exile, on the accession of Louis XVI.! And it was in answer to that confidence that it joined the privileged class, stopped all reform, and caused Target to be dismissed! In 1787, the people sustained it still, and, by way of recompense, the Parliament demanded that the States-General should be restored in imitation of the old form of 1614, that is to say useless, powerless, and derisive.

No, the people cannot confide in the judiciary power.

What is most strange, is, that it was this power, the guardian of order and the laws, that began the riot. Disturbances first begin about the Parliament, at every *lit de justice*. They were encouraged by the smiles of the magistrate. Young counsellors, such as d'Esprémesnil or Dupont, mindful of the *Fronde*, would willingly have imitated Broussel and the Coadjutor. The organised Basoche furnishes an army of clerks. It has its king, its judgments, its provosts, old students, as was Moreau at Rennes, or brilliant orators and duellists, like Barnave at Grenoble. The solemn prohibition that the clerks should not wear a sword, did but make them the more pugnacious.

The first club was the one opened by counsellor Dupont at his house in the Rue du Chaume in the Marais. There he assembled the most forward of the Parliament people, advocates and deputies, especially the Bretons. The club being transferred to Versailles, was called the *Breton Club*. On its return to Paris with the Assembly, and changing its character, it took up its quarters at the convent of the Jacobins.

Mirabeau went but once to Duport's; he used to call Duport, Barnave, and Lameth, the *Triumvirs*.* Sieyès also went but would not return there: "It is a den of political banditti, said he; they take outrages for expedients." Elsewhere he designates them still more harshly: "One may imagine them to be a set of wicked blackguards, ever in action, shouting, intriguing, and rioting lawlessly, recklessly, and then laughing at the mischief they had done. To them may be attributed the greater part of the errors of the Revolution. Happy would it have been for France, if the subaltern agents of these early perturbators, on becoming leaders in their turn, by a sort of customary hereditary right in long revolutions, had renounced the spirit by which they had been so long agitated!"

These subalterns alluded to by Sieyès, who will succeed their leaders (and who were far superior to them), were especially two men,—two revolutionary levers, Camille Desmoulins and Danton. These two men, one the king of pamphleteers, the other the thundering orator of the Palais Royal, before he was that of the Convention, cannot be further mentioned in this place. Besides, they are about to follow us, and will soon never leave us. In them, or in nobody, are personified the comedy and tragedy of the Revolution.

Presently they will let their masters form the club of the Jacobins, and will go and found the *Cordeliers*. At the present, all is mingled together: the grand club of a hundred clubs, among the *cafés*, the gaming-houses, and women, is still the Palais Royal. There it was that on the 12th of July, Desmoulins cried: To arms! And there, on the night of the 13th, sentence was passed on Flesselles and De Launey. Those passed on the Count D'Artois, the Condés and the Polignacs, were forwarded to them; and they had the astonishing effect, hardly to be expected from several battles, of making them depart from France. Hence arose a fatal predilection for the means of terror which had so well succeeded. Desmoulins, in the speech which he attributes to the lamp (lanterne) of La Grève, makes it say, "That strangers gaze upon it in an ecstasy of astonishment; that they wonder that a lamp should

* Meaning the Three Knaves,—a parody, of course, on triumvirate.—C. C.

have done more in two days than all their heroes in a hundred years."*

Desmoulins renews ever with inexhaustible wit the old jokes that filled all the middle ages on the gallows, the rope, and the persons hung. That hideous, atrocious punishment, which renders agony visible, was the usual text of the most joyous stories, the amusement of the vulgar, the inspiration of the Basoche. This found all its genius in Camille Desmoulins. That young lawyer of Picardy, with a very light purse and a still lighter character, was loitering briefless at the *Palais*, when the Revolution made him suddenly plead at the *Palais Royal*. A slight impediment in his speech did but render him the more amusing. His lively sallies playing about his embarrassed lips, escaped like darts. He followed his comic humour without much considering whether it might not end in tragedy. The famous judgments of the Basoche, those judicial farces which had so much amused the old *Palais*, were not more merry than the judgments of the *Palais Royal*; † the difference was that the latter were often executed in La Grève (the place of execution).

What is most strange, and a subject for reflection, is, that Desmoulins, with his roguish genius and mortal jests, and that bull of a Danton, who bellows murder, are the very men who, four years later, perish for having proposed *The Committee of Clemency*!

Mirabeau, Duport, the Lameths, and many others more moderate, approved of the acts of violence; several said they had advised them. In 1788, Sieyès demanded the death of the ministers. On the 14th of July, Mirabeau demanded De Broglie's head! Desmoulins lodged in his house. He marched willingly between Desmoulins and Danton; and, being tired of his Genevese, preferred these men; directing the former to write, and the latter to speak.

Target, a very moderate, prudent, cool-headed man, was intimate with Desmoulins, and gave his approbation to the pamphlet *De la Lanterne*.

* Camille Desmoulins, *Discours de la Lanterne aux Parisiens*, p. 2. He insinuates, however, rather adroitly, that those rapid condemnations are not without inconvenience, that they are liable to cause mistakes, &c.

† See the judgment of Duval d'Esprémesnil, related by C. Desmoulins in his letters.

This deserves an explanation : Nobody believed in justice, save in that of the people.

The legists especially despised the law, the jurisprudence of that time, in contradiction to all the ideas of the age. They were well acquainted with the tribunals, and knew that the Revolution had not more passionate adversaries than the Parliament, the High Court of Justice (*le Châtelet*), and the judges in general.

Such a judgment-seat was the enemy. To give up the trial of the enemy to the enemy, and charge it to decide between the Revolution and its adversaries, was to absolve the latter, render them stronger and more haughty, and send them to the armies to begin a civil war. Were they able to make one? Yes, in spite of the enthusiasm of Paris and the taking of the Bastille. They had foreign troops, and all the officers were for them ; they had especially a formidable body, which then constituted the glory of France, the officers of the navy.

The people alone, in that rapid crisis, were able to seize and strike such powerful criminals. But if the people should mistake? This objection did not embarrass the partizans of violence. They recriminated. "How many times," would they reply, "have not the Parliament and the Châtelet made mistakes?" They quoted the notorious mistakes in the cases of Calas and Sirven; they reminded their opponents of Dupaty's terrible memorial for three men condemned to the wheel,—that memorial burnt by the Parliament that was unable to answer it.

What popular trials, would they again say, can ever be more barbarous than the procedure of the regular tribunals, just as they now are, in 1789.—Secret proceedings, made entirely on documents that the defendant is not allowed to see; the accusations uncommunicated, the witnesses non-confronted, save that last short moment when the defendant, but just emerging from the utter darkness of his dungeon, bewildered by the light of day, comes to sit on his bench, replies or not, and sees his judges for the two minutes during which he hears himself condemned.* —Barbarous procedure, more barbarous sentences, execrable punishments!—We shudder to think of Damiens torn with pincers, quartered, sprinkled with molten lead.—Just before

* A truly eloquent passage in Dupaty's memorial for three men condemned to be broken on the wheel, p. 117 (1786, in 4to.).

the Revolution, a man was burned at Strasburg. On the 11th of August 1789, the Parliament of Paris, itself expiring, once more condemned a man to be broken on the wheel.

Such punishment, which was torture even for the spectator, wounded the souls of men, made them furious, mad, confounded every idea of justice, and subverted justice itself; the criminal who suffered such torture seemed no longer guilty; the guilty party was the judge; and a world of maledictions was heaped upon him. Sensibility was excited into fury, and pity grew ferocious. History offers several instances of this sort of furious sensibility which often transported the people beyond all the bounds of respect and fear, and made them rack and burn the officers of justice in place of the criminal.

A fact, too little noticed, but which enables us to understand a great many things, is, that several of our terrorists were men of an exquisite feverish sensibility, who felt cruelly the sufferings of the people, and whose pity turned into fury.

This remarkable phenomenon chiefly showed itself in nervous men, of a weak and irritable imagination, among artists of every kind: the artist is a man-woman.* The people whose nerves are stronger followed that impulse, but in the earlier period never gave it. The acts of violence proceeded from the Palais Royal, where the citizens, advocates, artists, and men of letters were predominant.

Even among these men, nobody incurred the whole responsibility. A Camille Desmoulins might start the game and begin the hunt; a Danton hunted it to death—in words, of course. But there was no lack of mute actors for the execution, of pale furious men to carry the thing to La Grève, where it was urged on by inferior Dantons. In the miserable crowd surrounding the latter, were strange looking figures, like beings escaped from the other world; spectral looking men, mad with hunger, delirious from fasting, and who were no longer men. It was stated that several, on the 20th of July, had not eaten for three days. Occasionally, they were resigned, and died without injuring anybody. The women were not so resigned; *they had children*. They wandered about like lionesses. In every riot they were the most inveterate and furious; they uttered

* I mean a complete man, who, having both sexes of the mind, is fruitful; however, having almost always the sense of irritation and choler predominant.

cries of frenzy, and made the men ashamed of their tardiness ; the summary judgments of La Grève were ever too long for them. They hung at once.*

England has had in this century her poetry of hunger.† Who will give its history to France ? A terrible history in the last century, neglected by the historians, who have reserved their pity for the artisans of famine. I have attempted to descend into the regions of that hell, guided nearer and nearer by deep groans of agony. I have shown the land more and more sterile in proportion as the exchequer seized and destroyed the cattle, and that the earth devoid of manure is condemned to a perpetual fast. I have shown how, as the nobles, the exempt from taxes, multiplied, the impost weighed ever more heavily on an ever declining land. I have not sufficiently shown how food became, from its very scarcity, the object of an eminently productive traffic. The profits were so obvious, that the king wished also to take a part. The world saw with astonishment a king trafficking with the lives of his subjects, a king speculating on scarcity and death,—a king the assassin of his people. Famine is no longer only the result of the seasons,—a natural phenomenon ; it is neither rain nor hail. It is a deed of the civil order : people starve by order of the king.

The king here is the system. The people were starving under Louis XV., and they starve under Louis XVI.

Famine was then a science, a complicated art of administration and commerce. Its parents are the exchequer and monopoly. It engenders a race apart, a bastard breed of contractors, bankers, financiers, revenue-farmers, intendants, counsellors, and ministers. A profound expression on the alliance between the speculators and politicians was uttered from the bowels of the people : *compact of famine*.

Among those men was one who had long been famous. His name *Foulon* (very expressive,‡ and which he strove to justify) was in the mouth of the people as early as 1756. He had begun his career as an intendant of the army, and in the

* They hung thus on the 5th of October the honest *abbé* Lefebvre, one of the heroes of the 14th of July ; luckily the rope was cut.

† Ebenezer Elliott, *Corn-law Rhymes* (Manchester, 1834), &c., &c.

‡ As if *foulons* : let us trample (on the people).—C. C.

enemy's country. Truly terrible to Germany, he was even more so to our soldiers. His manner of victualling was as fatal as a battle of Rosbach. He had grown fat on the destitution of the army, doubly rich by the fasting of the French and the Germans.

Foulon was a speculator, financier, and contractor on one hand, and on the other a member of the Council who alone judge the contractors. He expected certainly to become minister. He would have died of grief, if bankruptcy had been effected by any other than he. The laurels of the *abbé Terray* did not allow him to sleep. He had the fault of preaching his system too loudly; his tongue counteracted his doings and rendered it impossible. The Court relished very much the idea of not paying, but it wanted to borrow, and the calling the apostle of bankruptcy to the ministry was not the way to entice lenders.

Foulon was already an old man, one of the *good old days* of Louis XV., one of that insolent school that gloried in its rapine, boldly showing it, and which, for a trophy of depredation, built on the boulevard the Pavillon of Hanover. For his part, he had erected for himself, in the most frequented thoroughfare, at the corner of the Rue du Temple, a delightful mansion, which was still admired in 1845.

He was convinced that in France, as Figaro Beaumarchais says, "Everything ends in a song;" therefore he must assume a bold face, brave and laugh at public opinion. Hence those words which were re-echoed everywhere: "If they are hungry, let them browse grass. Wait till I am minister, I will make them eat hay; my horses eat it." He is also stated to have uttered this terrible threat: "France must be mowed." *Il faut faucher la France.*

The old man believed, by such bravado, to please the young military party, and recommend himself for the day he saw approaching, when the Court, wanting to strike some desperate blow, would look out for a hardened villain.

Foulon had a son-in law after his own heart, Berthier, the intendant of Paris, a clever, but hard-hearted man, as confessed by the royalists,* and unscrupulous, since he had espoused a fortune acquired in such a manner.

* According to Beaulieu's confession, *Mémoires*, ii., p. 10.

Of humble extraction, being descended from a race of provincial attorneys or petty magistrates, he was hard-working, active, and energetic. A libertine at the age of fifty, in spite of his numerous family, he purchased, on all sides, so it was said, little girls twelve years of age. He knew well that he was detested by the Parisians, and was but too happy to find an opportunity of making war upon them. With old Foulon, he was the soul of the three days' ministry. Marshal de Broglie augured no good of it: he obeyed.* But Foulon and Berthier were very ardent. The latter showed a diabolical activity in collecting arms, troops, everything together, and in manufacturing cartridges. If Paris was not laid waste with fire and sword, it was not his fault.

People feel astonished that persons so wealthy, so well-informed, of mature age and experience, should have cast themselves into such mad proceedings. The reason is, that all great financial speculators partake of the manner of gamblers; they have their temptations. Now, the most lucrative affair they could ever find, was thus to undertake to effect bankruptcy by military execution. That was hazardous. But what great affair is without risk? A profit is made on storm and fire; why not then on war and famine? Nothing risk, nothing gain.

Famine and war, I mean Foulon and Berthier, who thought they held Paris fast, were disconcerted by the taking of the Bastille.

On the evening of the 14th, Berthier attempted to reassure Louis XVI.; if he could but get from him the slightest order, he could even then pour down his Germans upon Paris.

Louis XVI. neither said nor did anything. From that moment, those two ministers felt they were dead men. Berthier fled towards the north, escaping by night from place to place; he passed four nights without sleeping, or even stopping, and yet had reached only Soissons. Foulon did not attempt to fly: first of all, he spread the report everywhere that he had not wished to be minister; next, that he was struck with apoplexy, and lastly pretended he was dead. He had himself buried with great pomp (one of his servants having died at the

* Alex. de Lameth, *Hist. de l'Assemblée constituante*, i., p. 67.

right moment.) This being done, he repaired very quietly to the house of his worthy friend Sartine, the former lieutenant of police.

He had good reason to be afraid: the movement was terrible. Let us go back a little. As early as the month of May, famine had exiled whole populations, driving them one upon the other. Caen and Rouen, Orleans, Lyons, and Nancy, had witnessed struggles for corn. Marseilles had seen at her gates a band of eight thousand famished people who must pillage or die; the whole town, in spite of the Government, in spite of the Parliament of Aix, had taken up arms, and remained armed.

The movement slackened a moment in June. All France, with eyes fixed on the Assembly, was waiting for it to conquer: no other hope of salvation. The most extreme sufferings were for a moment silent; one thought was predominant over all others.

Who can describe the rage, the horror of hope deceived, on the news of Necker's dismissal. Necker was not a politician; he was, as we have seen, timid, vain-glorious, and ridiculous. But in what concerned subsistence, it is but justice to say, that he was an indefatigable, ingenious administrator, full of industry and resources.* What is far better, he showed himself to be an honest, good, kind-hearted man; when nobody would lend to the state, he borrowed in his own name, and engaged his own credit as far as two millions of francs, the half of his fortune. When dismissed, he did not withdraw his security; but wrote to the lenders that he maintained it. In a word, if he knew not how to govern, he nourished the people, and fed them with his own money.

Necker and subsistence were words that had the same sound in the ears of the people. Necker's dismissal and famine, hopeless, irremediable famine, was what France felt on the 12th of July.

The provincial Bastilles, that of Caen and that of Bordeaux, either surrendered, or were taken by force, at the same time as that of Paris. At Rennes, Saint Malo, and Strasburg, the troops sided with the people. At Caen there was a fight among

* See Necker, *Œuvres*, vi., pp. 298—324.

the soldiers. A few men of the Artois regiment were wearing the patriotic symbols ; those of the Bourbon regiment, taking advantage of their being unarmed, tore them away. It was thought that Major Belzunce had paid them to offer this insult to their companions. Belzunce was a smart, witty officer, but impertinent, violent, and haughty. He was loud in expressing his contempt for the National Assembly, for the people, the *canaille* ; he used to walk in the town, armed to the teeth, with a ferocious-looking servant.* His looks were provoking. The people lost patience, threatened, and besieged the barracks ; an officer had the imprudence to fire ; and then the people ran to fetch cannon ; Belzunce surrendered, or was given up to be conducted to prison ; he could not reach it ; he was fired upon and killed, and his body torn piece-meal : a woman ate his heart.

There was blood-shed at Rouen and Lyons : at Saint Germain, a miller was beheaded : a monopolist baker was near being put to death at Poissy ; he was saved only by a deputation of the Assembly, who showed themselves admirable for courage and humanity, risked their lives, and preserved the man only after having begged him of the people on their knees.

Foulon would perhaps have outlived the storm, if he had not been hated by all France. His misfortune was to be so by those who knew him best, by his vassals and servants. They did not lose sight of him, neither had they been duped by the pretended burial. They followed and found the dead man alive and well, walking in M. de Sartine's park : " You wanted to give us hay," said they, " you shall eat some yourself ! " They put a truss of hay on his back, and adorn him with a nosegay of nettles, and a collar of thistles. They then lead him on foot to Paris, to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and demand his trial of the electors, the only authority that remained. The latter must then have regretted they had not hastened the popular decision which was about to create a real municipal power, give them successors, and put an end to their royalty. Royalty is the word ; the French Guards mounted guard at the royal palace of Versailles only on orders received (strange to say) from the electors of Paris.

* *Mémoires de Dumouriez*, ii., p. 53.

That illegal power, invoked for everything, but powerless in all things, weakened still further by its fortuitous association with the ancient *eschevins*, having nobody for its head but the worthy Bailly, the new mayor, and for its arm only Lafayette, the commander of a scarcely organised national guard, was now about to find itself in face of a terrible necessity.

They heard almost at the same time that Berthier had been arrested at Compiègne, and that Foulon was being conducted back again. For the former, they assumed a responsibility both serious and bold (fear is so sometimes), that of telling the people of Compiègne: "That there was no reason for detaining M. Berthier." They replied that he would then be assuredly killed at Compiègne, and that he could only be saved by conducting him to Paris.

As to Foulon, it was decided: That henceforth delinquents of that description should be lodged in the Abbaye, and that these words should be inscribed over the door: "Prisoners entrusted to the care of the nation." This general measure, taken in the interest of one man, secured for the ex-counsellor his trial by his friends and colleagues, the ancient magistrates, the only judges of that time.

All that was too evident; but also well watched by keensighted men, the attorneys and the Basoche, by annuitants, enemies of the minister of bankruptcy, and lastly, by many men who held public securities and were ruined by the fall in the funds. An attorney filed an indictment against Berthier, for his deposits of guns. The Basoche maintained that he had moreover one of those deposits with the abbess of Montmartre, and obliged a search to be made. La Grève was full of men, strangers to the people, "*of a decent exterior*," and some very well dressed. The Exchange was at La Grève.

People came at the same time to the Hôtel-de-Ville, to denounce Beaumarchais, another financier, who had stolen some papers from the Bastille. They ordered them to be taken back.

It was thought that the poor, at all events, might be kept silent by filling their mouths; so they lowered the price of bread: by means of a sacrifice of thirty thousand francs per day, the price was fixed at thirteen sous and a half the four pounds (equal to twenty sous at the present time).

The multitude of La Grève did not vociferate the less. At two, Bailly descends ; all demand justice. " He expounded the principles," and made some impression on those who were within hearing. The others shouted : " Hang ! Hang him ! " Bailly prudently withdrew, and shut himself up in the *Bureau des Subsistances*. The guard was strong, said he, but M. de Lafayette, who relied on his ascendancy, had the imprudence to lessen it.

The crowd was in a terrible fever of uneasiness lest Foulon should escape. He was shown to them at a window ; nevertheless, they broke open the doors : it became necessary to place him in a chair in front of the bureau, in the great hall of Saint-Jean. There, they began to preach to the crowd again, to " expound the principles," that he must be judged. " Judged instantly, and hung ! " cried the crowd. So saying, they appointed judges, among others two *curés*, who refused. " Make room there for M. de Lafayette ! " He arrives, speaks in his turn, avows that Foulon is a villain, but says it is necessary to discover his accomplices ; " Let him be conducted to the Abbaye ! " The front ranks, who heard him, consented ; not so the others. " You are joking," exclaimed a well-dressed man, " does it require time to judge a man who has been judged these thirty years ? " At the same time, a shout is heard, and a new crowd rushes in ; some say : " It is the faubourg," others : " It is the Palais Royal." Foulon is carried off and dragged to the lamp opposite ; they make him demand pardon of the nation. Then hoist him.—The rope broke twice. They persisted, and go for a new one. At length, having hung him, they chopped off his head, and carried it through Paris.

Meanwhile, Berthier has just arrived by the Porte Saint-Martin, through the most frightful mob that was ever seen : he had been followed for twenty leagues. He was in a cabriolet, the top of which they had broken to pieces in order to see him. Beside him sat an elector, Etienne de la Rivière, who was twenty times near being killed in defending him, and shielding him with his body. A furious mob was dancing on before him ; others flung black bread into the carriage :—" Take that, brigand, that is the bread you made us eat ! "

What had also exasperated all the population about Paris

was, that amid the scarcity, the numerous cavalry collected by Berthier and Foulon, had destroyed or eaten a great quantity of young green corn. This havoc was attributed to the orders of the intendant, to his firm resolution to prevent there being any crop and to starve the people.

To adorn that horrible procession of death, they carried before Berthier, as in the Roman triumphs, inscriptions to his glory:—"He has robbed the king and France. He has devoured the substance of the people. He has been the slave of the rich, and the tyrant of the poor. He has drunk the blood of the widow and the orphan. He has cheated the king. He has betrayed his country."*

At the fountain Maubuée, they had the barbarity to shew him Foulon's head, livid, with the mouth full of hay. At that sight his eyes were glazed; he smiled a ghastly smile.

They forced Bailly at the Hôtel-de-Ville to take his examination. Berthier alleged superior orders. The minister was his father-in-law, it was the same person. Moreover, if the hall of Saint-Jean was inclined to listen a little, La Grève neither listened nor heard; the vociferations were so dreadful, that the mayor and the electors felt more uneasy every moment. A new crowd of people having forced its way through the very mass, it was no longer possible to hold out. The mayor, on the advice of the board, exclaimed: "To the Abbaye!" adding that the guards were answerable for the prisoner. They could not defend him; but, seizing a gun, he defended himself. He was stabbed with a hundred bayonets; a dragoon, who imputed his father's death to him, tore out his heart, and ran to show it at the Hôtel-de-Ville.

The spectators in La Grève, who had watched from the windows the tact of the leaders in urging and exciting the mob, believed that Berthier's accomplices had taken their measures well, in order that he might not have the time to make any revelation. He alone, perhaps, possessed the real intentions of the party. They found in his portfolio the description of the persons of many friends of liberty, who, doubtless, had no mercy to expect, if the court conquered.

* *Histoire de la Révolution de '89, par deux amis de la liberté (Kerverseau et Clavelin, jusqu'au t. 7.)* t. 2, p. 130. See also the account of Etienne de la Rivière, in the *Procès-verbal des Electeurs*.

However this may be, a great number of the comrades of the dragoon declared to him, that having dishonoured the company he must die, and that they would all fight him till he was killed. He was killed the same evening.

CHAPTER III.

FRANCE IN ARMS.

Embarrassment of the Assembly.—It engages the People to confide in it, July 23rd.—Distrust of the People; Fears of Paris; Alarm of the Provinces.—Conspiracy of Brest; the Court compromised by the English Ambassador, July 27th.—Fury of the old Nobles and new Nobles: Menaces and Plots.—Terror in the Rural Districts.—The Peasants take up arms against the Brigands, Burn the Feudal Charters, and set fire to several Châteaux.—July to August, 1789.

THE vampires of the *ancien régime*, whose lives had done so much harm to France, did still more by their death.

These people, whom Mirabeau termed so well "the refuse of public contempt," are as if restored to character by punishment. The gallows becomes their apotheosis. They are now become interesting victims, the martyrs of monarchy; their legend will go on increasing in pathetic fictions. Mr. Burke canonized them and prayed on their tomb.

The acts of violence of Paris, and those of which the provinces were the theatre, placed the National Assembly in a difficult position, from which it could not well escape.

If it did not act, it would seem to encourage anarchy and authorise murder, and thus furnish a text for eternal calumny.

If it attempted to remedy the disorder; and raise fallen authority, it restored, not to the king, but to the queen and the court, the sword that the people had shivered in their hands.

In either hypothesis, despotism and caprice were about to be re-established, either for the old royalty or the royalty of the mob. At that moment they were destroying the odious symbol of despotism—the Bastille; and behold another Bastille—arbitrary rule—again springing up.

England rubs her hands with glee at this, and is grateful to

the *Lanterne*. "Thank God," says she, "the Bastille will never disappear."

What would you have done? Tell us, you officious counsellors, you friendly enemies, sages of European aristocracy, you who so carefully pour calumny on the hatred you have planted. Sitting at your ease on the dead bodies of Ireland, Italy, and Poland, deign to answer; have not your revolutions of interest cost more blood than our revolutions of ideas?

What would you have done? Doubtless what was advised on the eve and the morrow of the 22nd of July, by Lally-Tollendal, Mounier, and Malouet; to re-establish order, they wished that power should be restored to the king. Lally put his whole trust in the king's virtues. Malouet wanted them to entreat the king to use his power and lend a strong hand to the municipal authority. The king would have armed, and not the people; no national guard. Should the people complain, why then let them apply to the Parliament and the Attorney-General. Have we not magistrates? Foulon was a magistrate. So Malouet would send Foulon to the tribunal of Foulon.

It is necessary, they very truly said, to repress disturbances. Only it was necessary to come to a right understanding. This word comprehended many things:

Thefts, other ordinary crimes, pillaging committed by a starving population, murders of monopolists, irregular judgment pronounced on the enemies of the people, resistance offered to their plottings, legal resistance, resistance in arms. All comprised in the word *troubles*. Did they wish to suppress all with an equal hand? If royal authority was charged to repress the disturbances, the greatest in its estimation was, most certainly, the taking of the Bastille; it would have punished that first.

This was the reply made by Buzot and Robespierre on the 20th of July, two days before the death of Foulon; and this was what Mirabeau said, in his journal, after the event. He set this misfortune before the Assembly in its true light,—the absence of all authority in Paris, the impotency of the electors, who, without any lawful delegation of power, continued to exercise the municipal functions. He wished municipalities to be organised, invested with strength, and who should under-

take the maintenance of order. Indeed what other means were there than to strengthen the local power, when the central power was so justly suspected?

Barnave said three things were necessary: well-organized municipalities, citizen guards, and a legal administration of the law that might reassure the people.

What was that legal administration to be? A deputy-substitute, Dufresnoy, sent by a district of Paris, demanded sixty jurymen, chosen from the sixty districts. This proposition, supported by petition, was modified by another deputy, who wished magistrates to be added to the jurymen.

The Assembly came to no decision. An hour after midnight, being weary of contention, it adopted a proclamation, in which it claimed the prosecution of crimes of *lèse-nation*, *reserving to itself the right to indicate in the constitution the tribunal that should judge*. This was postponing for a long time. It invited to peace, for this reason: That the king had acquired *more rights than ever to the confidence* of the people, that there existed a *perfect accord*, &c.

Confidence! And yet there never was any confidence again! At the very moment the Assembly was speaking of confidence, a sad light burst forth, and fresh dangers were seen. The Assembly had been wrong; the people had been right. However willing the people might be to be deceived, and believe all was ended, common sense whispered that the *ancien régime* being conquered, would wish to have its revenge. Was it possible that a power which had possessed, for ages, all the forces of the country, administration, finances, armies, and tribunals, that still had everywhere its agents, its officers, its judges, without any change, and for compulsory partisans, two or three hundred thousand nobles or priests, proprietors of one-half or two-thirds of the kingdom,—could that immense and complicated power, which covered all France, die like one man, at once, by a single blow? Had it fallen down dead, shot by a cannon-ball of July? That is what the most simple child could not have been induced to believe.

It was not dead. It had been struck and wounded; morally it was dead; physically it was not. It might rise again. How would that phantom reappear? That was the whole question put by the people!—the one that troubled the imagination.

Common sense here assumed a thousand forms of popular superstition.

Everybody used to go and see the Bastille; all beheld with terror the prodigious rope ladder by which Latude descended the towers. They would visit those ominous towers, and those dark, deep, fetid dungeons, where the prisoner, on a level with the common sewers, lived besieged and menaced by rats, toads, and every kind of foul vermin.

Beneath a staircase they found two skeletons, with a chain and a cannon-ball which one of those unfortunates had doubtless to drag after him. Those dead bodies indicated crime. For the prisoners were never buried within the fortress; they were always carried by night to the cemetery of Saint Paul, the church of the Jesuits (the confessors of the Bastille); where they were buried under names of servants, so that nobody ever knew whether they were alive or dead. As for those two, the workmen who found them gave them the only reparation the dead could receive; twelve among them, bearing their implements, and holding the pall with respect, carried and buried them honourably in the parish church.

They were even hoping to make other discoveries in that old cavern of kings. Outraged humanity was taking its revenge; people enjoyed a mingled sentiment of hatred, fear, and curiosity,—an insatiable curiosity, which, when everything had been seen, hunted and searched for more, wished to penetrate further, suspected something else, imagined prisons under prisons, dungeons under dungeons, into the very bowels of the earth.

The imagination actually sickened at that Bastille. So many centuries and generations of prisoners who had there succeeded each other, so many hearts broken by despair, so many tears of rage, and heads dashed against the stones. What! had nothing left a trace! At most, some poor inscription, scratched with a nail, and illegible? Cruel envy of time, the accomplice of tyranny, conniving with it to efface every vestige of the victims!

They could see nothing, but they listened. There were certainly some sounds, groans, and hollow moans. Was it imagination? Why, everybody heard them. Were they to believe that wretched beings were still buried at the bottom of

some secret dungeon known only to the governor who had perished? The district of the Ile Saint-Louis, and others, demanded that they should seek the cause of those lamentable groans. Once, twice, nay, several times, the people returned to the charge; in spite of all these searches, they could not make up their minds: they were full of trouble and uneasiness for those unfortunates, perhaps buried alive.

Then again, if they were not prisoners, might they not be enemies? Was there not some communication, under the faubourg, between the subterraneous passages of the Bastille and those of Vincennes? Might not gunpowder be passed from one fortress to the other, and execute what De Launey had conceived the idea of doing, to blow up the Bastille, and overwhelm and crush the faubourg of liberty?

Public searches were made, and a solemn and authentic inquiry, in order to tranquillise the minds of the people. The imagination then transported its dream elsewhere. It transferred its mine and its fears to the opposite side of Paris, into those immense cavities whence our monuments were dug, those abysses whence we have drawn the Louvre, Notre Dame, and other churches. There, in 1786, had been cast, without there being any appearance of it (so vast are those caverns) all who had died in Paris for a thousand years, a terrible mass of dead bodies, which, during that year, were transported by night in funeral cars, preceded by the clergy, to seek, from the Innocents to the Tombe Issoire, a final repose and complete oblivion.

Those dead bodies were calling for others, and it was doubtless there that a volcano was preparing; the mine, from the Pantheon to the sky, was going to blow up Paris, and letting it fall again, would confound the shattered and disfigured members of the living and the dead,—a chaos of palpitating limbs, dead bodies, and skeletons.

Those means of extermination seemed unnecessary; famine was sufficient. A bad year was followed by a worse; the little corn that had grown up about Paris was trodden, spoilt, or eaten by the numerous cavalry that had been collected. Nay, the corn disappeared without horse-soldiers. People saw, or fancied they saw, armed bands that came by night and cut the unripe corn. Foulon, though dead, seemed to return on purpose to perform to the letter what he had promised: "Mow France."

To cut down the green corn and destroy it in the second year of famine, was also to mow down men.

Terror went on spreading ; the couriers, repeating those rumours, spread it every day from one end of the kingdom to the other. They had not seen the brigands, but others had ; they were at such and such places, marching forwards, numerous, and armed to the teeth ; they would arrive probably that night or on the morrow without fail. At such a place, they had cut down the corn in broad daylight, as the municipality of Soissons wrote in despair to the National Assembly, demanding assistance ; a whole army of brigands were said to be marching against that town. They hunted for them ; but they had disappeared in the mists of evening or in the morning fog.

What is more real, is, that to the dreadful scourge of famine, some had conceived the idea of adding another, which makes us shudder, when we do but remember the hundred years of warfare which, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, made a cemetery of our unfortunate country. They wanted to bring the English into France. This has been denied ; yet why ? It is more than likely, since it was solicited at a subsequent period ; attempted, and foiled at Quiberon.

But then, the question was not to bring their fleet on a shore difficult of access and destitute of defence, but to establish them firmly in a good, defensible place, to hand over to them the naval arsenal, wherein France, for a whole century, had expended her millions, her labours, and her energies ; the head, the prow of our great national vessel, and the stumbling-block of England. The question was to give up Brest.

Ever since France had assisted in the deliverance of America, and cut the British empire asunder, England had desired not its misery, but its ruin and utter destruction ; that some strong autumnal tide would raise the ocean from its bed, and cover with one grand flood all the land from Calais to the Vosges, the Pyrenees, and the Alps.

But, there was something still more desirable to be seen, which was, that this new inundation should be one of blood, the blood of France, drawn by herself from her own veins, that she should commit suicide and tear out her intestines.

The conspiracy of Brest was a good beginning. Only, there was reason to fear that England, by making friends with the

villains who were selling her their native land, might unite against her all France reconciled in one common indignation, and that there should be no longer any party.

Another thing might have sufficed to restrain the English government, which is, that, in the first moments, England, in spite of her hate, smiled upon our Revolution. She had no suspicion of its extent; in that great French and European movement, which was no less than the advent of eternal right, she fancied she perceived an imitation of her own petty insular and egotistical revolution of the seventeenth century. She applauded France as a mother encourages the child that is trying to walk after her. A strange sort of mother, who was not quite sure whether she would rather the child should walk or break its neck.

Therefore, England withstood the temptation of Brest. She was virtuous, and revealed the thing to the ministers of Louis XVI., without mentioning the names of the parties. In that half revelation, she found an immense advantage, that of perplexing France, to complete the measure of distrust and suspicion, have a terrible hold on that feeble government, and take a mortgage upon it. There was every chance of its not inquiring seriously into the plot, fearful of finding more than it wished and of smiting its own friends. And if it did not inquire, if it kept the secret to itself, England was able at any time to unveil the awful mystery. It kept that sword suspended over the head of Louis XVI.

Dorset, the English ambassador, was an agreeable man; he never stirred from Versailles; many thought he had found favour in the eyes of the queen, and had been well received. Nevertheless, this did not prevent him, after the taking of the Bastille, the importance of which he fully appreciated, as well as the weight of the blow that the king had received, from seizing every opportunity of ruining Louis, as far as lay in his power.

A rather equivocal letter from Dorset to the Count d'Artois having been intercepted by chance, he wrote to the minister that they were wrong in suspecting him of having in the least influenced the disturbances of Paris; far from it, added he quietly, your Excellency knows well the eagerness I evinced in imparting to you the infamous conspiracy of Brest, *in the begin-*

ning of June, the horror felt by my court, and the renewed assurance of its sincere attachment for the king and the nation. And then he entreated the minister to communicate his letter to the National Assembly.

In other words, he begged him to hang himself. His letter of the 26th of July stated, and published to the world, that the court, for two whole months, had kept the secret, without either acting or adopting, apparently reserving that plot as a last weapon in case of civil war,—the dagger of mercy (*poignard de miséricorde*), as they called it in the middle ages, which the warrior always kept, 'so that, when vanquished, thrown on the ground, and his sword broken, he might, whilst begging his life, assassinate his conqueror.

The minister Montmorin, dragged by the English into broad daylight, before the National Assembly, had but a very poor explanation to give, namely, that, not having the names of the guilty parties, they had been unable to prosecute. The Assembly did not insist; but the blow was struck, and was but so much the heavier. It was felt by all France.

Dorset's affirmation, which might have been believed to be false, a fiction, a brand cast at random by our enemies, appeared confirmed by the imprudence of the officers in the garrison of Brest, who, on the news of the taking of the Bastille, made a demonstration of intrenching themselves in the castle, menacing to subject the town to martial law, if it should stir. This it instantly did, taking up arms, and overpowering the guard of the port. The soldiers and sailors, bribed in vain by their officers, sided with the people. The noble corps of the marine was very aristocratical, but certainly anything but English. Suspicions nevertheless extended even to them, and even further, to the nobles of Brittany. In vain were the latter indignant, and vainly did they protest their loyalty.

This irritation carried to excess made people credit the foulest plots. The prolonged obstinacy of the nobility in remaining separate from the Third in the States-General, the bitter, desperate dispute which had arisen on that occasion in every town, large or small, in villages and hamlets, often in the same house, had inculcated an indelible idea in the people, that the noble was an enemy.

A considerable portion of the higher nobility, illustrious and

memorable in history, did what was necessary to prove that this idea was false, not at all fearful of the Revolution, and believing that, do what it might, it could not destroy history. But the others, and smaller gentry, less proud of their rank, more vain-glorious or more frank, moreover piqued every day by the new rising of the people whom they saw approaching nearer them, and who incommoded them more, declared themselves boldly the enemies of the Revolution.

The new nobles and the Parliament people were the most furious; the magistrates had become more warlike than the military; they spoke of nothing but battles, and vowed death, blood, and ruin. Those among them who had been till then the vanguard in opposing the wishes of the court, who had the most relished popularity, the love and enthusiasm of the public, were astounded and enraged, to see themselves suddenly indifferent or hated. They hated with a boundless hate. They often sought the cause of that very sudden change in the artful machination of their personal enemies, and political enmities were still further envenomed by ancient family feuds. At Quimper, one Kersalaun, a member of the Parliament of Brittany, one of the friends of Chalotais, and very lately the ardent champion of parliamentary opposition, becoming suddenly a still more ardent royalist and aristocrat, would walk gravely among the hooting crowds, who, however, durst not touch him, and naming his enemies aloud, used to say: "I shall judge them shortly, and wash my hands in their blood."*

One of these Parliament people, M. Memmay de Quincey, a noble *seigneur* in Franche-Comté, did not confine himself to threats. Envenomed probably by local animosity, and with his mind in a fever of frenzy, urged likewise perhaps by that fatal propensity of imitation which causes one infamous crime very often to engender many others, he realized precisely what De Launey had wanted to do,—what the people of Paris believed they had still to fear. He gave out at Vesoul, and in the neighbourhood, that by way of rejoicings for the good news, he would give a feast and keep open house. Citizens, peasants, soldiers, all arrive, drink, and dance. The earth opens, and a mine bursts, shatters, shivers, and destroys at random; the

* Duchatellier, *La Révolution en Bretagne*, i., p. 175.

ground is strewn with bleeding members. The whole was attested by the *curé*, who confessed a few of the wounded who survived, attested by the *gendarmerie*, and brought on the 25th of July before the National Assembly. The Assembly being exasperated, obtained leave from the king that every power should be written to, in order to demand that the guilty should be delivered up.*

An opinion was gaining ground and growing stronger, that the brigands who used to cut down the corn, in order to starve the people, were not foreigners, as had been first supposed, not Italians or Spaniards, as Marseilles believed in May, but Frenchmen, enemies to France, furious enemies of the Revolution, their agents, their servants, and bands whom they paid.†

The horror of them increased, everybody believing he had exterminating demons about him. In the morning, they would run to the field, to see whether it was not laid waste. In the evening, they were uneasy, fearing they might be burned in the night. At the very name of these brigands, mothers would snatch up their children and conceal them.

Where then was that royal protection, on the faith of which the people had so long slept? Where that old guardianship which had so well re-assured them that they had remained minors, and had, as it were, grown up without ceasing to be

* Later, M. de Memmay was restored on the pleading of M. Courvoisier. He maintained that the accident had been occasioned by the barrel of gunpowder, left by chance beside some drunken men. Three things had contributed to create another suspicion: 1st. M. de Memmay's absence on the day of the feast; he was unwilling to be present, he said, wishing to give full scope to the rejoicings; 2ndly, his entire disappearance; 3rdly, the Parliament, of which he was an ancient member, would not allow the ordinary tribunals to make an inquiry, called the affair before a higher court, and reserved the trial to itself.

† The historians all affirm, without the least proof, that these alarms and accusations, all that great commotion, proceeded from Paris, from such and such persons. Doubtless, the leaders influenced the Palais Royal; the Palais Royal, Paris; and Paris, France. It is not less inexact to attribute everything to the Duke of Orleans, like most of the royalists; or to Dupont, like M. Droz; to Mirabeau, like Montgaillard, &c. See the very wise answer of Alexandre de Lameth. What he ought to have added is, that Mirabeau, Dupont, the Lameths, the Duke of Orleans, and most of the men of that period, less energetic than is believed, were delighted in being thought to possess so much energy, such vast influence. They replied but little to such accusations, smiled modestly, leaving such to believe as would, that they were great villains.

children? They began to perceive that, no matter what sort of man Louis XVI. might be, royalty was the intimate friend of the enemy.

The king's troops, which, at other times, would have appeared a protection, were precisely a subject of dread. Who were at their head? The more insolent of the nobles, those who the least concealed their hate. They used to excite, to bribe when necessary the soldiers against the people, and to intoxicate their Germans; they seemed to be preparing an attack.

Man was obliged to rely on himself, and on himself alone. In that complete absence of authority and public protection, his duty as a father of a family constituted him the defender of his household. He became, in his house, the magistrate, the king, the law, and the sword to execute the law, agreeably to the old proverb: "The poor man in his home is king."

The hand of Justice, the sword of Justice: that king has his scythe in default of gun, his mattock, or his iron fork. Now let those brigands come! But he does not wait for them. Neighbours unite, villagers unite, and go armed into the country to see whether those villains dare come. They proceed and behold a band. Do not fire however. Those are the people of another village, friends and relations, who are also hunting about.*

France was armed in a week. The National Assembly learn every moment the miraculous progress of that Revolution; they find themselves, in an instant, at the head of the most numerous army ever seen since the crusades. Every courier that arrived astonished and almost frightened them. One day, somebody came and said: "You have two hundred thousand men." The next day, another said: "You have five hundred thousand men." Others arrived: "A million of men have armed this week,—two millions, three millions."

And all that great armed multitude, rising suddenly from the furrow, asked the Assembly what they were to do.

Where then is the old army? It seems to have disappeared. The new one, being so numerous, must have stifled it without fighting, merely by crowding together.

People have said *France is a soldier*, and so she has been from that day. On that day a new race rose from the earth,—

* Montlosier, *Mémoires*, i., p. 233. Toulangeon, i., p. 56, &c., &c.

children born with teeth to tear cartridges, and with strong indefatigable limbs to march from Cairo to the Kremlin, and with the admirable gift of being able to march and fight without eating, of having only "their good spirits to feed and clothe them."

Relying on their good spirits, joy and hope! Who then has a right to hope, if it be not he who bears in his bosom the enfranchisement of the world?

Did France exist before that time? It might be denied. She became at once a sword and a principle. To be thus armed is *to be*. What has neither idea nor strength, exists but on sufferance.

They *were* in fact; and they wanted *to be* by right.

The barbarous middle ages did not admit their existence, denying them as men, and considering them only as things. That period taught, in its singular school-divinity, that souls redeemed at the same price are all worth the blood of a God; then debased those souls, thus exalted, to brutes, fastened them to the earth, adjudged them to eternal bondage, and annihilated liberty.

This lawless right they called conquest, that is to say, ancient injustice. Conquest, would it say, made the nobles, the lords. "If that be all," said Sièyes, "we will be conquerors in our turn."

Feudal right alleged, moreover, those hypocritical acts, wherein it was supposed that man stipulated against himself: wherein the weaker party, through fear or force, gave himself up without reserving anything, gave away the future, the possible, his children unborn, and future generations. Those guilty parchments, a disgrace to nature, had been sleeping with impunity for ages in the archives of the castles.

Much was said about the grand example given by Louis XVI., who had enfranchised the last serfs of his domains. An imperceptible sacrifice that cost the treasury but little, and which had scarcely any imitator in France.

What! it will be said, were the *seigneurs* in '89 hard-hearted, merciless men?

By no means. They were a very varied class of men, but generally feeble and physically decayed, frivolous, sensual, and sensitive, so sensitive that they could not look closely at the

unfortunate.* They saw them in idyls, operas, stories, and romances, which caused them to shed tears of compassion; they wept with Bernardin Saint-Pierre, with Grétry and Sedaine, Berquin and Florian; they found merit in their tears, and would say to themselves: "I have a good heart."

Thus weak-hearted, easy, open-handed, and incapable of withstanding the temptation of spending, they required money, much money, more than their fathers. Hence the necessity of deriving large profits from their lands, of handing the peasant over to men of money, stewards, and agents. The more feeling the masters possessed, the more generous and philanthropic they were at Paris, and the more their vassals died of hunger; they lived less at their castles, in order not to see this misery, which would have been too painful for their sensibility.

Such was in general that feeble, worn-out, effeminate society. It willingly spared itself the sight of oppression, and oppressed only by proxy. However, there were not wanting provincial nobles, who prided themselves on maintaining in their castles the rude feudal traditions, and governed their family and their vassals harshly. Let us merely mention here the celebrated *Ami des hommes*, Mirabeau's father, the enemy of his family, who would lock up all his household, wife, sons, and daughters, people the state-prisons, have law-suits with his neighbours, and reduce his people to despair. He relates that, on giving a *fête*, he was himself astonished at the moody, savage aspect of his peasants. I can easily believe it; those poor people were probably afraid lest the *Ami des hommes* should take them for his children.

We must not be surprised if the peasant, having once taken up arms, made use of them, and had his revenge. Several lords had cruelly vexed their districts, who remembered it when the time had come. One of them had walled up the village well, and monopolised it for his own use. Another had seized on the common lands. They perished. Several other murders are recorded, which, doubtless, were acts of revenge.

* This is confessed by M. De Maitre, in his *Considérations sur la Révolution* (1796).

The general arming of the towns was imitated in the rural districts. The taking of the Bastille encouraged them to attack their own bastilles. The only subject of astonishment, when one knows what they underwent, is, that they began so late. Sufferings and promises of revenge had accumulated by delay, and been stored up to a frightful height. When that monstrous avalanche, long pent up in a state of ice and snow, suddenly thawed, such a mass gave way, that everything was overwhelmed in its fall.

It would be necessary to distinguish, in that immense scene of confusion what appertains to the *wandering bands* of pillagers,—people driven about by famine, from what the *domiciled peasants*, the *communes*, did against their lord.

The evil has been carefully collected, but not so the good. Several lords found defenders in their vassals : for instance, the Marquis de Montfermeil, who, in the preceding year, had borrowed a hundred thousand francs in order to relieve them. Nay, the most furious sometimes stopped short in presence of weak adversaries. In Dauphiné, for instance, a castle was respected, because they found in it only a sick lady, in bed, with her children ; they merely destroyed the feudal archives.

Generally, the peasant marched at once to the castle to demand arms ; then, more daring, he burned the acts and titles. The greater part of those instruments of bondage, those which were the most immediate and oppressive, were much oftener in the register offices, with the attorneys and notaries. The peasant rarely went there. He preferred attacking the antiquities,—the original charters. Those primitive titles, on fine parchments, adorned with triumphant seals, remained in the treasury of the castle to be shown on grand days. They were stored away in sumptuous cases, in velvet portfolios at the bottom of an oaken ark,—the glory of the turret. No important feudal manor but showed, near its feudal dove-cote, its tower of archives.

Our country people went straight to the tower. There, in their estimation, was the Bastille, tyranny, pride, insolence, and the contempt of mankind ; for many centuries, that tower had seemed to sneer at the valley, sterilizing, blighting, and oppressing it with its deadly shadow. A guardian of the country in barbarous times, standing there as a sentinel, it became

later an object of horror. In '89, what was it but the odious witness of bondage, a perpetual outrage, to repeat every morning to the man trudging to his labour, the everlasting humiliation of his race! "Work, work on, son of serfs, earn for another's profit; work, and without hope."

Every morning and every evening, for a thousand years, perhaps more, that tower had been cursed. A day came when it was to fall.

O glorious day, how long you have been in coming! How long our fathers expected and dreamed of you in vain! The hope that their sons would at length behold you, was alone able to support them; otherwise, they would no longer have consented to live; they would have died in their agony. And what has enabled me, their companion labouring beside them in the furrow of history, and drinking their bitter cup, to revive the suffering middle ages, and yet not die of grief? Was it not you, O glorious day, first day of liberty? I have lived in order to relate your history!

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIGHTS OF MAN.

Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.—Disturbances; the Danger of France.—The Assembly creates the Committee of Inquiry, July 27th. —Attempts made by the Court; it wants to prevent the Trial of Besenval; the Royalist Party wishes to make a Weapon of Public Charity.—The Revolutionary Part of the Nobility offer to abandon the Feudal Rights.—*Night of the 4th of August*; Class Privileges abandoned; Resistance of the Clergy; Privileges of Provinces abandoned.

ABOVE all that great commotion, in a region more serene, the National Assembly, without allowing itself to be molested by noise and clamour, was buried in thought and meditation.

The violence of party spirit which had divided it, seemed awed and restrained by the grand discussion with which its labours began. Then people plainly saw how profoundly that aristocracy, the natural adversary of the interests of the Revolution, had been wounded in its ideas. They were all Frenchmen, after all, all sons of the eighteenth century and philosophy.

Either side of the Assembly, preserving its opposition, nevertheless entered upon the solemn examination of the *declaration of rights* with due solemnity.

The question was not a petition of rights, as in England, an appeal to the written law, to contested charters, or to the true or false liberties of the Middle Ages.

The question was not, as in America, to go seeking from state to state the principles which each of them acknowledged, to sum up and generalize them, and construct with them (*à posteriori*) the total formula which the confederation would accept.

The question was to give from above, by virtue of a sovereign, imperial, pontifical authority, the *credo* of the new age. What authority? Reason, discussed by a whole century of philosophers, profound thinkers, accepted by every mind and penetrating social order, and lastly, fixed and reduced to a formula by the logicians of the Constituent Assembly. The question was to impose as authority on reason what reason had found at the bottom of free inquiry.

It was the philosophy of the age, its legislator, its Moses, descending from the mount, with the rays of glory on its brow, and bearing the tables of the law in its hands.

There have been many disputations for and against the declaration of rights, but nothing to the point.

First of all, we have nothing to say to such as Bentham and Dumont, to utilitarians and quacks, who acknowledge no law but the written law, who know not that right is right only so far as it is conformable to right, to absolute reason. Mere attorneys, nothing more, in the garb of philosophers; what right have they to despise practical men? Like them, who write the law upon paper and parchment, we would engrave ours on tables of eternal right, on the rock that bears the world: invariable justice and indestructible equity.

To answer our enemies, let us confine ourselves to them and their contradictions. They sneer at the Declaration, and submit to it; they wage war against it for thirty years, promising their people the liberties which it consecrates. When conquerors in 1814, the first word they address to France they borrow from the grand formula which she laid

down.* Conquerors did I say? No, conquered rather, and conquered in their own hearts; since their most personal act, the treaty of the Holy Alliance, reproduces the right that they have trampled on.

The Declaration of *Rights* attests the Supreme Being, the guarantee of human morality. It breathes the sentiment of *duty*. Duty, though not expressed, is no less everywhere present; everywhere you perceive its austere gravity. A few words borrowed from the language of Condillac, do not prevent us from recognising in the *ensemble* the true genius of the Revolution,—a Roman gravity and a stoic spirit.

Right was the first thing to be spoken of at such a moment,† it was rights that it was necessary to attest and claim for the people. People had believed till then that they had only *duties*.

However high and general such an act may be, and made to last for ever, can one reasonably expect it to bear no marks of the troublous period of its birth, no sign of the storm?

The first word was uttered three days before the 14th of July and the taking of the Bastille; the last, a few days before the people brought the king to Paris (the 6th of October). A sublime apparition of right between two storms.

No circumstances were ever more terrible, nor any discussion more majestic or more serious, even in the midst of emotion. The crisis afforded specious arguments to both parties.

Take care, said one, you are teaching man his rights, when he perceives them but too plainly himself; you are transporting him to a high mountain, and showing him his boundless empire. What will happen, when, on descending, he will find himself stopped by the special laws that you are going to make, when he will meet with boundaries at every step?‡

There was more than one answer, but certainly the strongest

* And very voluntarily borrowed; since it was done by all the kings of Europe at the head of eight hundred thousand soldiers. They acknowledge that every people has the right of choosing its government. See Alexandre de Lameth, p. 121.

† Of right and liberty alone: nothing more at first in that charter of enfranchisement. I explain myself more fully in the Introduction, and in the other volumes.

‡ *Discours de Malouet.*

was the state of affairs. The crisis was then at its height, and the combat still doubtful. It was impossible to find too high a mountain whereon to fix the standard. It was necessary to place that flag, if possible, so high that the whole world might behold it, and that its tricolor streamer might rally the nations. Recognised as the common standard of humanity, it became invincible.

There are still people who think that grand discussion excited and armed the people, that it put the torch in their hand, and promoted warfare and conflagration. The first stumbling-block to that argument is, that the acts of violence began previous to the discussion. The peasants did not need metaphysical formula in order to rise in arms. Even afterwards it had but little influence. What armed the rural districts was, as we have already said, the necessity of putting down pillage; it was the contagion of the cities taking up arms; and, above all, it was the frenzy and enthusiasm caused by the taking of the Bastille.

The grandeur of that spectacle and the variety of its terrible incidents troubled the vision of history. It has mixed together and confounded three distinct and even opposite facts which were taking place at the same time.

1st. The excursions of the famished vagrants, who cut down the corn at night, and cleared the earth like locusts. Those bands, when strong, would break open lone houses, farms, and even castles.

2ndly. The peasant, in order to repel these bands, was in need of arms, and demanded and exacted them from the castles. Once armed and master, he destroyed the charters, in which he beheld an instrument of oppression. Woe to detested nobles! Then they did not attack his parchments alone, but his person also.

3rdly. The cities, the arming of which had brought about that of the rural districts, were obliged to repress them. The National Guards, who then had nothing aristocratical about them, since they comprehended everybody, marched forth to restore order; they went to the succour of those castles which they detested. They often brought the peasants back to town as prisoners, but soon released them.*

* All this is very much embroiled by historians, according to their passions. I have consulted old men, especially my illustrious and venerable friends MM. Béranger and de Lamennais.

I speak of the peasants domiciliated in the neighbourhood. As for the bands of lawless strollers, pillagers, and brigands, as they were called, the tribunals, and even the municipalities, often treated them with extreme severity : a great number of them were put to death. Security was at length restored, and agriculture protected. If the depredations had continued, cultivation must have ceased, and France would have been starved to death the following year.

A strange situation for an Assembly to be discussing, calculating, weighing syllables, at the summit of a world in flames. Danger on the right and on the left. To repress the disorder, they have, one would think, but one means : to restore the ancient order, which is but a worse disorder.

It is commonly supposed that they were impatient to lay hold of power ; that is true of certain of the members, but false, very false, with respect to the great majority. The character of that Assembly, considered in the mass, its originality, like that of the period, was a singular faith in the power of ideas. It firmly believed that truth, once found, and written in the formula of laws, was invincible. It would require but two months (such was the calculation, however, of very serious men), in two months the constitution was made ; it would, by its omnipotent virtue, overawe authority and the people : the Revolution was then completed, and the world was to bloom again.

Meanwhile, the position of affairs was truly singular ; Authority was in one place destroyed, in another very strong ; organised on such a point, in complete dissolution on another, feeble for general and regular action, though formidable still to corruption, intrigue, and perhaps to violence. The accounts of those latter years, which appeared later, sufficiently show what resources were possessed by the court, and how they employed them,—how they tampered with the press, the newspapers, and even with the Assembly. Emigration was beginning, and with it an appeal to foreigners,—to the enemy,—a persevering system of treason and calumny against France.

The Assembly felt it was sitting upon a volcano. For the general safety, it was obliged to descend from the heights where it was making laws, and take a nearer view of what was passing on the earth. A stupendous descent ! Solon,

Lycurgus, or Moses, debased to the miserable cares of public *surveillance*, forced to watch over spies, and become an inspector of police!

The first hint was given by Dorset's letters to Count d'Artois, by his still more alarming explanations, and the notice of the conspiracy of Brest, so long concealed by the court. On the 27th of July, Duport proposed to create a committee of inquiry, composed of four persons. He uttered these ominous words: "Allow me to refrain from entering into any discussion. Plots are forming. There must not be any question of sending before the tribunals. We must acquire horrible and indispensable information."

The number four reminded them too much of the three inquisitors of State. It was therefore raised to twelve.

The spirit of the Assembly, in spite of its necessities, was by no means one of police and inquisition. A very serious discussion took place as to whether the secrecy of letters was to be violated, whether they ought to open that suspected correspondence, addressed to a prince who, by his precipitate flight, declared himself an enemy. Gouy d'Arcy and Robespierre wished them to be opened. But the Assembly, on the opinion of Chapelier, Mirabeau, and even of Duport, who had just demanded a sort of State inquisition, magnanimously declared the secrecy of letters inviolable, refused to open them, and caused them to be restored.

This decision restored courage to the partisans of the court. They made three bold attempts. On Sieyès being proposed for president, they opposed to him the eminent legislator of Rouen, Thouret, a man much esteemed, and very agreeable to the Assembly. His merit in their estimation was his having voted, on the 17th of June, against the title of *National Assembly*, that simple formula of Sieyès which contained the Revolution. To bring into opposition those two men, or rather those two systems, in the question of the presidency, was putting the Revolution on its trial, and attempting to see whether it could not be made to retrograde to the 16th of June.

The second attempt was to prevent the trial of Besenval. That general of the queen against Paris had been arrested in his flight. To judge and condemn him was to condemn

also the orders according to which he had acted. Necker, in returning, had seen him on his journey, and given him hopes. It was not difficult to obtain from his kind heart the promise of a solemn step to be taken with the city of Paris.* To obtain a general amnesty, in the joy of his return, end the Revolution, restore tranquillity, and appear as after the deluge, the rainbow in the heavens, was most charming to the vanity of Necker.

He went to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and obtained everything of those who happened to be there,—electors, representatives of districts, simple citizens, a mixed, confused multitude, without any legal character. The joy of the people was extreme, both in the hall and in the public square. He showed himself at the window, with his wife on his right, and his daughter on his left, both weeping and kissing his hands. His daughter, Madame de Staël, fainted with delight.†

That done, nothing was done. The districts of Paris justly protested; this clemency filched from an Assembly lost in emotion, granted in the name of Paris by a crowd without authority, a national question, settled at once by a single town,—by a few of its inhabitants,—and that at the moment the National Assembly was creating a committee of inquiry and preparing a tribunal,—this was unprecedented and audacious. In spite of Lally and Mounier, who defended the amnesty, Mirabeau, Barnave, and Robespierre obtained a decision for a trial. The court were again defeated; however, they had one great consolation, worthy of their usual wisdom: they had compromised Necker, and destroyed the popularity of the only man who had any chance of saving them.

The court failed in the same way in the affair of the Presidency. Thouret, alarmed at the exasperation of the people, and the menaces of Paris, retired.

A third and far more serious attempt of the royalist party was made by Malouet; this was one of the strangest and most dangerous trials that the Revolution had met with in her perillous route, where her enemies were every day laying stumbling-blocks, and digging pits at every step.

* He says expressly that he was speaking in the name of the king. See his speech, *Hist. de la Révolution, par deux amis de la liberté*, ii., p. 235.

† Staël, *Considérations*, 1st part, ch. xxiii. See also Necker, t. vi., ix.

The reader may remember the day, when, before the Orders had yet united, the clergy had gone hypocritically to show the Third Estate the black bread which the people had to eat, and to engage them, in the name of charity, to lay aside useless disputes, in order to undertake with them the welfare of the poor. This is precisely what was done by Malouet, in other respects an honourable man, but a blind partisan of a royalty then all but destroyed.

He proposed to organise a vast *poor-rate*, bureaus for relief and work, the first funds of which should be furnished by the establishments of charity, the rest by a general tax on all, and by a loan—a noble and honourable proposal, countenanced at such a moment by pressing necessity, but giving the royalist party a formidable political initiative. It placed in the hands of the king a three-fold fund, the last portion of which, the loan, was unlimited; it made him the leader of the poor, perhaps the general of the beggars against the Assembly. It found him dethroned, and placed him upon a throne, far more absolute, more solid, by making him king of famine, reigning by what is most imperious, food and bread.

What became of liberty?

For the thing to create less alarm, and appear a mere trifle, Malouet lowered the number of the poor to four hundred thousand,—an amount evidently false.

If he did not succeed, he nevertheless derived a great advantage, that of giving his party, the king's, a fine colouring in the eyes of the people,—the glory of charity. The majority, which would be too much compromised by refusing, was about compulsorily to follow and obey, and to place that grand popular machine in the hands of the king.

Malouet proposed, lastly, to consult the Chambers of Commerce and the manufacturing towns, in order to aid the workmen, “to augment work and wages.”

A sort of opposition bidding was about to be established between the two parties. The question was to obtain or to bring back the people. The proposal of *giving* to the indigent could only be met by one to authorise workmen to *pay taxes no longer*,—one, at least, to authorise country labourers no longer to pay the most odious of taxes, the feudal tributes.

Those rights were in great jeopardy. In order to destroy

them the more effectually and annihilate the acts by which they were consecrated, they burned even the castles. The large proprietors, who were sitting in the Assembly, were full of uneasiness. A property so detested and so dangerous, which compromised all the rest of their fortune, began to appear to them a burden. To save those rights, it was necessary either to sacrifice a part, or to defend them by force of arms, rally all the friends, clients, and domestics they might possess, and begin a terrible war against the whole people.

Except an inconsiderable number of old men who had served in the Seven Years' War, and young men who had taken a part in that of America, our nobles had made no other campaigns than garrison evolutions. They were, however, individually brave in private quarrels. The petty nobles of Vendée and Brittany, till then so unknown, suddenly stood forth and showed themselves heroic. Many nobles and emigrants distinguished themselves also in the great wars of the empire. Perhaps, if they had acted in concert and rallied together, they might for some time have arrested the Revolution. It found them dispersed, isolated, and weak in their loneliness. Another cause of their weakness, very honourable for them, was, that many of them were in heart against themselves,—against the old feudal tyranny, and that they were at the same time its heirs and its enemies; educated in the generous ideas of the philosophy of the time, they applauded that marvellous resuscitation of mankind, and offered up prayers for it, even though it cost their own ruin.

The richest *seigneur* in feudal properties, after the king, was the Duke d'Aiguillon.* He possessed royal prerogatives in two provinces of the South: all of odious origin, and which his grand-uncle Richelieu had conferred upon himself. His father, the colleague of Terray, minister of bankruptcy, had been despised even more than he was detested. The young Duke d'Aiguillon felt the more keenly the necessity of making himself popular; he was, with Duport and Chapelier, one of the leaders of the *Breton Club*. There he made the generous and political proposition of giving a portion to the fire in that great conflagration, to throw down a part of the building in order to

* Alex. de Lameth, *Histoire de l'Assemblée Constituante*, i., p. 96.

save the rest ; he wished, not to sacrifice the feudal rights (many nobles had no other fortune), but to offer to the peasant to *purchase his exemption at a moderate price.*

Viscount de Noailles was not at the club, but he got scent of the proposal, and filched away the honour of being the first proposer. A younger son, and possessing no feudal rights, he was still more generous than the Duke d'Aiguillon. He proposed not only to permit a redemption from rights, but to *abolish without redemption* seigneurial statute-labour (*corvées*) and other personal bondage.

This was considered as an attack, a threat,—nothing more. About two hundred deputies applauded the proposition. They had just read a projected decree in which the Assembly reminded people of the duty of respecting properties, of paying rent, &c.

The Duke d'Aiguillon produced a very different effect. He said that in voting, on the preceding evening, rigorous measures against those who attacked the castles, a scruple had arisen in his mind, and he had asked himself whether those men were really guilty. And he continued to declaim warmly, violently, against feudal tyranny, that is to say, against himself.

That 4th of August, at eight in the evening, was a solemn hour in which feudality, after a reign of a thousand years, abdicates, abjures, and condemns itself.

Feudality has spoken. It is now the turn of the people. M. Le Guen de Kerengal, a Bas-Breton, in the costume of his country, an unknown deputy, who never spoke either before or after, ascends the tribune, and reads some twenty lines of an accusing, menacing character. He reproached the Assembly with singular energy and authority for not having prevented the burning of the castles, by breaking, said he, the cruel arms they contain,—those iniquitous acts which debase man to the brute, which yoke man and beast to the plough, which outrage decency. "Let us be just ; let them bring to us those titles, monuments of the barbarity of our fathers. Who among us would not make an expiatory pile to burn those infamous parchments ? You have not a moment to lose ; a delay of one day occasions new conflagrations ; the downfall of empires is announced with far less uproar. Would you give laws only to

France in Ruins?" This made a deep impression. Another Breton did but weaken it by calling to mind several strange, cruel, incredible rights: the right that the lord of the manor had had to cut open the bellies of two of his vassals on returning from hunting, and of thrusting his feet into their bleeding bodies!

A provincial nobleman, M. de Foucault, making an attack on the great lords who had begun this lamentable discussion, demanded that, before anything else, the great should sacrifice their pensions and salaries,—the prodigious donations they drew from the king, doubly ruining the people, both by the money they extorted, and by the neglect into which the province fell, all the rich following their example, deserting their lands, and crowding about the court. MM. de Guiche and de Montemart believed the attack to be personal, and replied sharply that the persons alluded to would sacrifice everything.

Enthusiasm gained ground. M. de Beauharnais proposed that penalties should henceforth be the same for all, nobles and plebeians, and employments open to all. One asked for gratuitous justice; another, for the abolition of seigneurial justice, the inferior agents of which were the scourge of the rural districts.

M. de Custine said that the conditions of redemption proposed by the Duke d'Aiguillon were difficult, that those difficulties ought to be removed, and succour granted to the peasant.

M. de la Rochefoucault, extending the benevolence of France to the human race, demanded an amelioration for negro slavery.

Never did the French character shine forth more charmingly in its benevolence, vivacity, and generous enthusiasm. These men who had required so much time and study to discuss the Declaration of Rights, counting and weighing every syllable, having now an appeal made to their disinterestedness, replied unhesitatingly; they trod money under foot, and those rights of nobility which they loved more than money. A grand example which the expiring nobility bequeathed to our citizen aristocracy!

Amid the general enthusiasm and emotion, there was also a proud carelessness, the vivacity of a noble gamester who takes delight in flinging down his gold. All those sacrifices were

made by rich and poor, with equal good humour, sometimes with archness (like Foucault's motion), and lively sallies.

"And what have I to offer?" said Count de Virieu. "At least the sparrow of Catullus." He proposed the destruction of the destroying pigeons, of the feudal dove-cot.

The young Montmorency demanded that all those prayers should be immediately converted into laws. Lepelletier de Saint-Fargeau desired that the people should immediately enjoy those benefits. Himself immensely rich, he wished that the rich, the nobles, the exempt from taxes, should assess themselves for this purpose.

Chapelier, the president, on being pressed to put the question to the vote, archly observed that none of *Messieurs* the clergy having yet been able to obtain a hearing, he should have to reproach himself with having shut them out from the tribune.*

The Bishop of Nancy then expressed, in the name of the ecclesiastical lords, a wish that the price of redemption from feudal rights should not accrue to the present possessor, but be invested as funds useful to the benefice itself.†

This was economy and husbandry rather than generosity. The Bishop of Chartres, a sensible man, who spoke next, found a way of being generous at the expense of the nobility. He sacrificed the game rights (*droits de chasse*), very important for the nobles, but of little value for the clergy.

The nobles did not shrink; they demanded the consummation of this renunciation. Several were reluctant. The Duke du Châtelet said, smiling at his neighbours: "The bishop deprives us of hunting; I will take away his tithes." And he proposed that tithes in kind should be converted into pecuniary dues redeemable at pleasure.

The clergy allowed those dangerous words to fall without observation, and followed their usual tactics of putting forward the nobility; the archbishop of Aix spoke forcibly against

* Omitted in the *Moniteur* and the *Histoire Parlementaire*. See the *Histoire des deux Amis de la Liberté*, ii., p. 321.

† Arranged and disfigured in the *Moniteur* and the historians who wish to conceal the egotism of the clergy. The *Procès-verbal* says only: He adhered, *in his own name and in the name of several members of the clergy*, to this system of redeeming the feudal rights, by submitting (by the incumbents) to the lodging and use of the funds arising from them.—*Archives du Royaume. Procès-verbaux de l'Assemblée Nationale*. 4 Août, '89. B. 2.

feudality, demanding that in future every kind of feudal convention should be prohibited.

"I wish I had land," said the Bishop of Uzès, "I should delight in giving it into the hands of the labourers. But we are only depositaries."

The Bishop of Nîmes and Montpellier gave nothing, but demanded that the artisans and labourers should be exempt from charges and taxation.

The poorer ecclesiastics were alone generous. Some *curés* declared that their conscience did not allow them to have more than one benefice. Others said: "We offer our fees." Dupont objected that the deficiency must then be made up to them. The Assembly was affected, and refused to accept the widow's mite.

Emotion and enthusiasm had gradually increased to an extraordinary degree. Nothing was heard in the Assembly but applause, congratulations, and expressions of mutual benevolence. Foreigners, present at that meeting, were struck with astonishment; then, for the first time, they beheld France, and all the goodness of her heart. What ages of struggles had not effected in their countries, she had just done in a few hours by disinterestedness and sacrifice. Money and pride trodden under foot, together with the old hereditary tyranny, antiquity, tradition itself,—the monstrous feudal oak, felled by one blow,—that accursed tree, whose branches covered the whole earth with a deadly shade, whilst its innumerable roots shot forth into the obscurest regions, probing and absorbing life, preventing it from rising to the light of day.

Everything seemed finished. But a scene no less grand was then beginning.

After the privileges of classes, came those of provinces. Such as were called state provinces (*pays d'état*), which had privileges of their own, divers advantages for liberties and taxation, were ashamed of their egotism; they wanted to be France, in spite of what it might cost their personal interest and their old fond reminiscences.

As early as 1788, Dauphiné had magnanimously offered to surrender its privileges, and advised the other provinces to do the same. It renewed that offer. The most obstinate, the Bretons, though bound by their mandates, and tied down by

the ancient treaties of their province with France, nevertheless manifested the desire of uniting. Provence said the same, next Burgundy and Bresse, Normandy, Poitou, Auvergne, and Artois. Lorraine, in affecting language, said that it would not regret the domination of its adored sovereigns who were the fathers of the people, if it had the happiness of uniting with its brethren, and of entering with them all together into the maternal mansion of France,—into that vast and glorious family.

Next came the turn of the cities. Their deputies came in crowds to lay their privileges upon the altar of their native land.

The officers of justice were unable to pierce the crowd surrounding the tribune, to bring their tribute. A member of the Parliament of Paris imitated their example, renouncing the hereditary succession of offices,—transmissible nobility.

The archbishop of Paris demanded that they should remember God on that great day, and sing a *Te Deum*.

“But the king, gentlemen,” said Lally, “the king who has convoked us after the long lapse of two centuries, shall he not have his reward? Let us proclaim him the restorer of French liberty!”

The night was far advanced : it was two o’clock. That night dispelled for ever the long and painful dream of the thousand years of the middle ages. The approaching dawn was that of liberty!

Since that marvellous night, no more classes, but Frenchmen; no more provinces, but one France!

God save France!

CHAPTER V.

THE CLERGY AND THE PEOPLE.

Prophetic Speeches of Fauchet.—Powerless Efforts for Reconciliation.—Imminent Ruin of the Ancient Church.—The Church had abandoned the People.—Buzot claims the Estates of the Clergy for the Nation, August 6th.—Suppression of Tithes, August 11th.—Religious Liberty acknowledged.—League of the Clergy, the Nobility, and the Court.—Paris abandoned to itself.—No Public Authority, few Acts of Violence.—Patriotic Donations.—Devotion and Sacrifice.—(August, 1789.)

THE resurrection of the people who at length burst their sepulchre, feudality itself rolling away the stone by which it

had kept them immured, the work of ages in one night, such was the first miracle—the divine and authentic miracle—of this new Gospel !

How applicable here are those words pronounced by Fauchet over the skeletons found in the Bastille ! “ Tyranny had sealed them within the walls of those dungeons which she believed to be eternally impenetrable to the light. *The day of revelation is come !* The bones have arisen at the voice of French liberty ; they depose against centuries of oppression and death, prophesying the regeneration of human nature, and the life of nations ! ” *

Noble language of a true prophet. Let us cherish it in our hearts, as the treasure of hope. Yes, they will rise again ! The resurrection begun on the ruins of the Bastille, continued through the night of the 4th of August, will display in the light of social life those crowds still languishing in the shadows of death. Day dawned in '89 ; next, the morn arose shrouded in storms ; then, a dark, total eclipse. The sun will yet shine out. “ *Solem quis dicere falsum audeat ?* ”

It was two hours after midnight when the Assembly concluded its important work, and separated. In the morning (August 5th), Fauchet was making, at Paris, his funeral oration over the citizens killed before the Bastille. Those martyrs of liberty had just gained, that very night, in the destruction of the great feudal Bastille, their palm, and the price of their blood.

Fauchet there found once more words worthy of eternal remembrance : “ How those false interpreters of divine oracles have injured the world ! They have consecrated despotism, and made God the accomplice of tyrants. What says the Gospel ? ‘ You will have to appear before kings ; they will order you to act unrighteously, and you shall resist them till death.’ False doctors triumph, because it is written : *Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s.* But must they also give unto Cæsar what is not Cæsar’s ? Now liberty is not Cæsar’s ; it belongs to human nature.”

* Printed at the end of Dussaulx’s *Œuvre des Sept Jours*. He says admirably on another occasion : “ We have reached the middle of time. Tyrants are ripe.” See his three speeches on liberty, spoken at Saint-Jacques, Sainte-Marguerite, and Notre-Dame.

Those eloquent words were still more so in the mouth of him who, on the 14th of July, had shown himself doubly heroic by courage and humanity. Twice had he attempted, at the peril of his life, to save the lives of others, and stop the effusion of blood. A true Christian and true citizen, he had wished to save all, both men and doctrines. His blind charity defended at the same time ideas hostile to one another, and contradictory dogmas. He united the two Gospels in one bond of love, without any attention to the difference of their principles, or to their opposite characters. Spurned and excluded by the priests, he looked upon what had caused his persecution as something, for that very reason, that he ought to respect and cherish. Who has not fallen into the very same error? Who has not cherished the hope of saving the past by hastening the future? Who would not have wished to quicken the spirit without killing the old form?—to rekindle the flame without molesting the dead ashes? Vain endeavour! In vain would we withhold our breath. It expands in the air, and flies to the four quarters of the world.

Who was then able to see all that? Fauchet was mistaken, and so were many others. They endeavoured to believe the struggle ended, and peace restored; they wondered to find that the Revolution had been already in the Gospel. The heart of every one who heard those glorious words leaped with joy. The impression was so strong, the emotion so poignant, that they crowned the apostle of liberty with a civic wreath. The people and the armed population, the conquerors of the Bastille and the citizen guard, with drums beating in front, led him back to the Hôtel-de-Ville; a herald carried a crown before him.

Was this the last triumph of the priest, or the first of the citizen? Will those two characters, here confounded, be able to blend together? The tattered raiment, glorified by the balls of the Bastille, allow us here to perceive the new man; in vain would he extend that robe in order to cover the past.

A new creed is advancing towards us, and two others are departing (how can it be helped?)—the Church and Royalty.

Of the three branches of the antique oak,—Feudality, Royalty, Church,—the first fell on the 4th of August; the two others totter to and fro; I hear a loud wind in the branches; they struggle, and resist strongly; their leaves are scattered

on the ground ; nothing can withstand that storm. Let what is doomed perish !

No regret, no useless tears ! Gracious God ! how long had that which imagines it is now dying, been sterile, dead and useless !

What bears an overwhelming testimony against the Church in '89, is the state of utter neglect in which she had left the people. For two thousand years she alone had the duty of instructing them ; and how had she performed it ? What was the end and aim of the pious foundations in the middle ages ? What duties did they impose on the clergy ? The salvation of souls, their religious improvement, the softening of manners, the humanising of the people. They were your disciples, and given to you alone. Masters, what have you taught them ?

Ever since the twelfth century, you have continued to speak to them a language no longer theirs, and the form of worship has ceased to be a mode of instructing them. The deficiency was supplied by preaching ; but gradually it became silent, or spoke for the rich alone. You have neglected the poor, disdained the coarse mob. Coarse ? Yes, through you. Through you, two people exist : the upper, civilised and refined to excess ; the lower, rude and savage, much further removed from the other than in the beginning. It was your duty to fill up the interval, to be ever raising the lowly, and of the two to make one people. Now the crisis has come ; and I see no cultivation acquired, no softening of manners among the classes of which you made yourselves the masters ; what they possess, they have naturally, from the instinct of Nature, from the sap that she implants within us. The good is innate ; and to whom must I attribute the evil, the anarchy, but to those who were answerable for their souls, and yet abandoned them ?

In '89, what are your famous monasteries, your antique schools ? The abode of idleness and silence. Grass grows there, and the spider spins her web. And your pulpits ? Mute. And your books ? Empty.

The eighteenth century passes away, an age of attacks, in which, from time to time, your adversaries summon you in vain to speak and to act, if you be still alive.

One thing alone might be urged in your defence ; many of you believe it, though not one will avow it. It is, that, for a long time past, doctrine was exhausted, that you no

longer said anything to the people, having nothing to say, that you had lived your ages, an age of teaching,—an age of disputation—that everything passes and changes; the heavens themselves will pass away. Powerfully attached to outward forms, unable to separate the spirit from them, not daring to aid the phoenix to die to live again, you remained dumb and inactive in the sanctuary, occupying the place of the priest. But the priest was no longer there.

Depart from the temple. You were there for the people, to give them light. Go, your lamp is extinct. They who built those churches, and lent them to you, now demand them. Who were they? The France of those times; restore them to the France of to-day.

To-day (August, '89,) France takes back the tithes, and to-morrow (November 2nd), she will take back the estates. By what right? A great jurisconsult has said: "By the right of *disherison*." The dead church has no heirs. To whom does her patrimony revert? To her author, to that PATRIA, whence the new church shall rise.

On the 6th of August, when the Assembly had been long discussing a loan proposed by Necker, and which, as he confessed, would not suffice for two months, a man who till then had seldom spoken, suddenly ascended the tribune; this time he said but these words: "The ecclesiastical estates belong to the nation."

Loud murmurs. The man who had so frankly* stated the position of things was Buzot, one of the leaders of the future Gironde party: his youthful, austere, fervent, yet melancholy countenance,* was one of those which bear impressed upon their brow the promise of a short destiny.

The attempted loan failed, was again proposed, and at length carried. It had been difficult to get it voted, and it was more difficult to get it completed. To whom were the public going to lend? To the *ancien régime* or the Revolution? Nobody yet knew. A thing more sure, and clear to every mind, was the uselessness of the clergy, their perfect unworthiness, and the incontestable right that the nation had to the ecclesiastical estates. Everybody was acquainted with the morals of the pre-

* See a description of him in the *Mémoires* of Madame Roland, t. ii.

lates and the ignorance of the inferior clergy. The *curés* possessed some virtues, a few instincts of resistance, but no information; wherever they ruled they were an obstacle to every improvement of the people, and caused them to retrograde. To quote but one example, Poitou, civilised in the sixteenth century, became barbarous under their influence; they were preparing for us the civil war of Vendée.

The nobility saw this as plainly as the people; in their resolutions they demand a more useful employment of such and such church estates. The kings also had plainly seen it; several times they had made partial reforms, the reform of the Templars, that of the Lazarists, and that of the Jesuits. There remained something better to be done.

It was a member of the nobility, the Marquis de Lacoste, who, on the 8th of August, was the first to propose in precise formula: 1st. The ecclesiastical estates belong to the nation. 2ndly. Tithes are suppressed (no mention of redeeming them). 3rdly. The titularies are pensioned. 4thly. The salaries of the bishops and curates shall be determined by the provincial Assemblies.

Another noble, Alexandre de Lameth, supported the proposition by lengthened reflections on the matter and the right of foundations, a right so well examined already by Turgot as early as 1750, in the *Encyclopédie*. "Society," said Lameth, "may always suppress every noxious institution." He concluded by giving the ecclesiastical estates in pledge to the creditors of the State.

All this was attacked by Grégoire and Lanjuinais. The Jansenists, though persecuted by the clergy, did not the less defend them.

This is most remarkable, as it shows that privilege is very tenacious, even more so than the tunic of Nessus, and could not be torn off without tearing away the flesh! The greatest minds in the Assembly, Sieyès and Mirabeau, absent on the night of the 4th of August, deplored its results. Sieyès was a priest, and Mirabeau a noble. Mirabeau would have wished to defend the nobility and the king, unhesitatingly sacrificing the clergy. Sieyès defended the clergy sacrificed by the nobility.*

* He attempts to justify this, in his *Notice* on his life, but does not succeed.

He said that tithes were a real property. How so? By their having been at first a voluntary gift, a valid donation. To which they were able to reply in the terms of law, that a donation is revocable *for cause of ingratitude*, for the forgetting or neglecting the end for which it was given; that end was the instruction of the people, so long abandoned by the clergy.

Sieyès urged adroitly that, in every case, tithes could not benefit the present possessors, who had purchased with the knowledge, prevision, and deduction of the tithes. This would be, said he, to make them a present of an income of seventy millions (of francs). The tithes were worth more than a hundred and thirty. To give them to the proprietors, was an eminently political measure, engaging for ever the cultivator, the firmest element of the people, in the cause of the Revolution.

That onerous, odious impost, variable according to the provinces, which often amounted to one-third of the harvest! which caused war between the priest and the labourer, which obliged the former, in harvest-time, to make a contemptible investigation, was nevertheless defended by the clergy, for three whole days, with obstinate violence. "What!" exclaimed a *curé*, "when you invited us to come and join you, *in the name of the God of peace!* was it to cut our throats!" So tithes were then their very life,—what they held most precious. On the third day, seeing everybody against them, they made the sacrifice. Some fifteen or twenty *curés* renounced, throwing themselves on the generosity of the nation. The great prelates, the Archbishop of Paris, and Cardinal De Larochehoucauld, followed that example, and renounced, in the name of the clergy. Tithes were abolished without redemption *for the future*, but maintained for the present, till provision had been made for the support of the pastors (August 11th).

The resistance of the clergy could not be availing. They had almost the whole Assembly against them. Mirabeau spoke three times; he was more than usually bold, haughty, and often ironical, yet using respectful language. He knew well the assent he must meet with both in the Assembly and among the people. The grand theses of the eighteenth century were reproduced, as things consented to, admitted beforehand, and incontestable. Voltaire returned there, a terrible, rapid con-

queror. Religious liberty was consecrated, in the Declaration of Rights, and not *tolerance*, a ridiculous term, which supposes a right to tyranny. That of *predominant* religion, *predominant* worship, which the clergy demanded, was treated as it deserved. The great orator, in this the organ both of the century and of France, put this word under the ban of every legislation. "If you write it," said he, "have also a *predominant* philosophy, and *predominant* systems. Nothing ought to be predominant but right and justice."

Those who know by history, by the study of the middle ages, the prodigious tenacity of the clergy in defending their least interest, may easily judge what efforts they would now make to save their possessions, and their most precious possession, their cherished intolerance.

One thing gave them courage ; which is, that the provincial nobility, the Parliament people, all the *ancien régime*, had sided with them in their common resistance to the resolutions of the 4th of August. More than one who, on that night, proposed or supported them, was beginning to repent.

That such resolutions should have been taken by their representatives,—by nobles, was more than the privileged classes could comprehend. They remained confounded, beside themselves with astonishment. The peasants who had commenced by violence, now continued by the authority of the law. It was the law that was levelling, throwing down the barriers, breaking the seigneurial boundary, defacing escutcheons, and opening the chase throughout France to people in arms. All armed, all sportsmen, and all nobles ! And this very law which seemed to ennoble the people and *disennoble* the nobility, had been voted by the nobles themselves !

If privilege was perishing, the privileged classes, the nobles and priests, preferred to perish also ; they had for a long time become identified and incorporated within equality and intolerance. Rather die a hundred times than cease to be unjust ! They could accept nothing of the Revolution, neither its principle, written in its Declaration of Rights, nor the application of that principle in its great social charter of the 4th of August. However irresolute the king might be, his religious scruples caused him to be on their side, and guaranteed his obstinacy. He would, perhaps, have consented to a diminution

of the regal power ; but tithes—that sacred property—and then the jurisdiction of the clergy, *their right of ascertaining secret transgressions*, disavowed by the Assembly, and the liberty of religious opinions proclaimed, that timorous prince could not admit.

They might be sure that Louis XVI. would, of his own accord, and without needing any outward impulse, reject, or at least attempt to elude, the Declaration of Rights, and the decrees of the 4th of August.

But between that and his being made to act and fight, the distance was still great. He abhorred bloodshed. It might be possible to place him in such a position as to oblige him to make war ; but to obtain it directly, or to get from him resolution or order, was what nobody could ever think of.

The queen had no assistance to expect from her brother Joseph, too much occupied about his Belgium. From Austria she received nothing but counsels, those of the ambassador, M. Mercy d'Argenteau. The troops were not sure. What she possessed, was a very great number of officers, of the navy and others, and Swiss and German regiments. For her principal forces, she had an excellent select army of from twenty-five to thirty thousand troops in Metz and its environs, under M. de Bouillé, a devoted, resolute officer, who had given proofs of great vigour. He had kept those troops in severe discipline, inculcating in them aversion and contempt for citizens and the mob.

The queen's opinion had ever been to depart, to throw themselves into M. de Bouillé's camp, and begin a civil war.

Being unable to prevail upon the king, what remained but to wait, to wear out Necker, to compromise him ; to wear out Bailly and Lafayette, to allow disorder and anarchy to continue ; to see whether the people, whom they supposed to act by the instigation of others, would not grow tired of their leaders who left them to die of hunger. The excess of their miseries must at length calm, wear out, and dispirit them. They expected from day to day, to see them ask for the restoration of the *ancien régime*, the good old time, and entreat the king to resume his absolute authority.

"You had bread, when under the king: now that you have twelve hundred kings, go and ask them for some!" These

words, attributed to a minister of those days,* were, whether uttered or not, the opinion of the court.

This policy was but too well aided by the sad state of Paris. It is a terrible but certain fact, that, in that city of eight hundred thousand souls, there was no public authority for the space of three months, from July to October.

No municipal power:—That primitive, elementary authority of societies was as it were dissolved. The sixty districts used to discuss but did nothing. Their representatives at the Hôtel-de-Ville were just as inactive. Only, they impeded the mayor, prevented Bailly from acting. The latter, a studious man, recently an astronomer and academician, quite unprepared for his new character, always remained closeted in the *bureau des subsistances*, uneasy, and never knowing whether he could provision Paris.

No police:—It was in the powerless hands of Bailly. The lieutenant of police had given in his resignation, and was not replaced.

No justice:—The old criminal justice was suddenly found to be so contrary to ideas and manners, and appeared so barbarous, that M. de Lafayette demanded its immediate reform. The judges were obliged to change their old customs suddenly, learn new forms, and follow a more humane but also a more dilatory mode of procedure. The prisons became full, and crowded to excess; what was henceforth the most to be feared, was to be left there and forgotten.

No more corporation authorities:—The deans, syndics, &c., and the regulations of trades, were paralysed and annulled by the simple effect of the 4th of August. The most jealous of the trades, those the access to which had till then been difficult; the butchers, whose shambles were a sort of fief; the printers, and the peruke-makers, multiplied exceedingly. Printing, it is true, was increasing to an immense extent. The peruke-makers, on the contrary, beheld at the same time their number increasing, and their customers disappearing. All the rich were leaving Paris. A journal, affirms that in three months sixty thousand passports were signed at the Hôtel-de-Ville.†

* See the partial but curious article *Saint-Priest*, in the *Biographie Michaud*, evidently written from information given by his family.

† *Révolutions de Paris*, t. ii., No. 9, p. 8.

Vast crowds of perukemakers, tailors, and shoemakers, used to assemble at the Louvre and in the Champs Élysées. The National Guard would go and disperse them, sometimes roughly and uncereemoniously. They used to address complaints and demands to the town impossible to be granted,—to maintain the old regulations, or else make new ones, to fix the price of daily wages, &c. The servants, left out of place by the departure of their masters, wanted to have all the Savoyards sent back to their country.

What will always astonish those who are acquainted with the history of other revolutions is, that in this miserable and famished state of Paris, denuded of all authority, there were on the whole but very few serious acts of violence. One word, one reasonable observation, occasionally a jest, was sufficient to check them. On the first days only, subsequent to the 14th of July, there were instances of violence committed. The people, full of the idea that they were betrayed, sought for their enemies haphazard, and were near making some cruel mistakes. M. de Lafayette interposed several times at the critical moment, and was attended to: he saved several persons.*

When I think of the times that followed, of our own time, so listless and interested, I cannot help wondering that extreme misery did not in the least dispirit this people, nor drew from them one regret for their ancient slavery. They could suffer and fast. The grand deed achieved in so short a time, the oath at the Jeu-de-Paume, the taking of the Bastille, the night of the 4th of August, had exalted their courage, and inspired everybody with a new idea of human dignity. Necker, who had departed on the 11th of July, and returned three weeks after, no longer recognised the same people. Dussaulx, who had passed sixty years under the *ancien régime*, can find old France nowhere. Everything is changed, says he, deportment, cos-

* On those occasions, M. de Lafayette was truly admirable. He found in his heart, in his love for order and justice, words and happy sayings above his nature, which was, we must say, rather ordinary. Just as he was endeavouring to save Abbé Cordier, whom the people mistook for another, a friend was conducting Lafayette's young son to the Hôtel-de-Ville. He seized the opportunity, and turning towards the crowd: "Gentlemen," said he, "I have the honour to present you my son." The crowd, lost in surprise and emotion, stopped short. Lafayette's friends led the abbé into the Hôtel and he was saved. See his *Mémoires*, ii., p. 264.

tume, the appearance of the streets, and the signs. The convents are full of soldiers ; and stalls are turned into guard-houses. Everywhere are young men performing military exercises ; the children try to imitate them, and follow them, stepping to time. Men of fourscore are mounting guard with their great-grandchildren : " Who would have believed," say they to me, " that we should be so happy as to die free men ? "

A thing little noticed is, that in spite of certain acts of violence of the people, their sensibility had increased ; they no longer beheld with *sang froid* those atrocious punishments which under the old government had been a spectacle for them. At Versailles, a man was going to be broken on the wheel as a parricide ; he had raised a knife against a woman, and his father throwing himself between them, had been killed by the blow. The people thought the punishment still more barbarous than the act, prevented the execution, and overthrew the scaffold.

The heart of man had expanded by the youthful warmth of our Revolution. It beat quicker, was more impassioned than ever, more violent, and more generous. Every meeting of the Assembly presented the touching, interesting spectacle of patriotic donations which people brought in crowds. The National Assembly was obliged to become banker and receiver ; there they came for everything, and sent everything, petitions, donations, and complaints. Its narrow enclosure was, as it were, the mansion of France. The poor especially would give. Now, it was a young man who sent his savings, six hundred francs, painfully amassed. Then, again, poor artisans' wives, who brought whatever they had,—their jewels and ornaments that they had received at their marriage. A husbandman came to declare that he gave a certain quantity of corn. A schoolboy offered a purse collected and sent to him by his parents, his New-year's gift perhaps, his little reward. Donations of children and women, generosity of the poor, the widow's mite, so small, and yet so great before their native land !—before God !

Amid the commotion of ambition and dissension, and the moral sufferings under which it laboured, the Assembly was affected and transported beyond itself by this magnanimity of the people. When M. Necker came to expose the misery and

destitution of France, and to solicit, in order to live at least two months longer, a loan of thirty millions, several deputies proposed that he should be guaranteed by their estates,—by those of the members of the Assembly. M. de Foucault, like a true nobleman, made the first proposition, and offered to pledge six hundred thousand francs, which constituted his whole fortune.

A sacrifice far greater than any sacrifice of money, is that which all, both rich and poor, made for the public welfare,—that of their time, their constant thoughts, and all their activity. The municipalities then forming, the departmental administrations which were soon organized, absorbed the citizen entirely, and without exception. Several of them had their beds carried into the offices, and worked day and night.*

To the fatigue add also the danger. The suffering crowds were ever distrustful; they blamed and threatened. The treachery of the old administration caused the new one to be treated with suspicion. It was at the peril of their lives that those new magistrates worked for the salvation of France.

But the poor! Who can tell the sacrifices of the poor? At night, the poor man mounted guard; in the morning, at four or five o'clock, he took his turn (*à la queue*) at the baker's door; and late, very late, he got his bread. The day was partly lost, and the workshop shut. Why do I say workshop? They were almost all closed. Why do I say the baker? Bread was wanting, and still more often the money to buy bread. Sorrowful and fasting, the unfortunate being wandered about, crawled along the streets, preferring to be abroad to hearing at home the complaints and sobs of his children. Thus the man who had but his time and his hands wherewith to gain his living and feed his family, devoted them in preference to the grand business of public welfare. It caused him to forget his own.

O noble, generous nation! Why must we be so imperfectly acquainted with that heroic period? The terrible, violent, heart-rending deeds which followed, have caused a world of sacrifices which characterised the outset of the Revolution to

* As did the administrators of Finistère. See, for what relates to this truly admirable activity, Duchatellier's *Révolution en Bretagne, passim*.

be forgotten. A phenomenon more grand than any political event then appeared in the world ; that power of man, by which man is God—the power of sacrifice had augmented.

CHAPTER VI.

THE VETO.

Difficulty of procuring Provisions.—The urgent State of Things.—Can the King check everything?—Long Discussion on the *Veto*.—Secret Projects of the Court.—Is there to be one Chamber or two?—The English School.—The Assembly required to be dissolved and renewed.—It was heterogeneous, discordant, and powerless.—Discordant Principles of Mirabeau.—His Impotency. (August-September, 1789).

THE situation was growing worse and worse. France, between two systems, the old and the new, tossed about without advancing ; and she was starving.

Paris, we must say, was living at the mercy of chance. Its subsistence, ever uncertain, depended on some arrival or other, on a convoy from Beauce or a boat from Corbeil. The city, at immense sacrifices, was lowering the price of bread ; the consequence was, that the population of the whole environs, for more than ten leagues round, came to procure provisions at Paris. The question was therefore to feed a vast country. The bakers found it advantageous to sell at once to the peasant, and afterwards, when the Parisians found their shops empty, they laid the blame on the administration for not provisioning Paris. The uncertainty of the morrow, and vain alarms, further augmented the number of difficulties ; everybody reserved, stored up, and concealed provisions. The administration, put to its last resources, sent in every direction, and bought up by fair means or by force. Occasionally, loads of flour on the road were seized and detained on their passage by the neighbouring localities whose wants were pressing. Versailles and Paris shared together ; but Versailles kept, so it was said, the finest part, and made a superior bread. This was a great cause of jealousy. One day, when the people of Versailles had been so imprudent as to turn aside for themselves a supply intended for the Parisians, Bailly, the honest

and respectful Bailly, wrote to M. Necker, that if the flour was not restored, thirty thousand men would go and fetch it on the morrow. Fear made him bold. His head was in danger if provisions failed. It often happened that at midnight he had but the half of the flour necessary for the morning market.*

The provisioning of Paris was a kind of war. The national guard was sent to protect such an arrival, or to secure certain purchases; purchases were made by force of arms. Being incommoded in their trade, the farmers would not thrash any longer, neither would the millers grind any more. The speculators were afraid. A pamphlet by Camille Desmoulins designated and threatened the brothers Leleu, who had the monopoly of the royal mills at Corbeil. Another, who passed for the principal agent of a company of monopolists, killed himself, or was killed, in a forest near Paris. His death brought about his immense frightful bankruptcy, of more than fifty millions of francs. It is not unlikely, that the court, who had large sums lodged in his hands, suddenly drew them to pay a multitude of officers who were invited to Versailles, and perhaps to be carried off to Metz: without money they could not begin the civil war. This was already war against Paris, and the very worst perhaps, from their keeping the town in such a state of peace. No work,—and famine!

"I used to see," says Bailly, "good tradespeople, mercers and goldsmiths, who prayed to be admitted among the beggars employed at Montmartre in digging the ground. Judge what I suffered." He did not suffer enough. We see him, even in his *Mémoires*, too much taken up with petty vanities—questions of precedence, to know by what honorary forms the speech for the consecration of the flags should begin, &c.

Neither did the National Assembly suffer enough from the sufferings of the people. Otherwise it would not have prolonged the eternal debate of its political *scolastique*. It would have understood that it ought to hasten on the movement of reforms, remove every obstacle, and abridge that mortal transition where France remained between the old order and the new. Everybody saw the question, yet the Assembly saw it not. Though endowed with generally good intentions and vast

* *Mémoires de Bailly, passim.*

information, it seemed to have but little perception of the real state of things. Impeded in its progress by the opposition of its royalist and aristocratic members, it was still more so by those habits of the bar or of the Academy, which its most illustrious members, men of letters or advocates, still preserved.

It was necessary to insist and obtain at once, at any price, without wasting time in talking, the sanction of the decrees of the 4th of August, and to bury the feudal world; it was necessary to deduce from those general decrees political laws, and those administrative laws which should determine the application of the former; that is to say, to organise, to arm the Revolution, to give it form and power, and make it a living being. As such it became less dangerous than by being left floating, overflowing, vague, and terrible, like an element,—like a flood, or a conflagration.

It was especially necessary to use dispatch. It was a thunderbolt for Paris to learn that the Assembly was occupied only with the inquiry whether it would recognise in the King the *absolute right of preventing* (absolute veto), or the *right of adjourning*, of suspending for two years, four years, or six years. For such pressing, mortal evils, this prospect was despair itself, a condemnation without appeal. Four years, six years, good God! for people who knew not whether they should live till the morrow.

Far from progressing, the Assembly was evidently receding. It made two retrograde and sadly significant choices. It appointed for president La Luzerne, the bishop of Langres, a partisan of the *veto*, and next Mounier, once more a partisan of the *veto*.

The warmth with which the people espoused this question has been treated with derision. Several, so it was stated, believed that the *veto* was a person, or a tax.* There is nothing laughable in this but the sneerers themselves. Yes, the *veto* was equal to a tax, if it prevented reforms and a diminution of the taxes. Yes, the *veto* was eminently personal; a man had but to say, *I forbid*, without any reason; it was quite enough.

M. de Sèze thought to plead skilfully for this cause, by

* See Ferrières, Molleville Beaulieu, &c.

saying that the question was not about a person, but a *permanent will*, more steady than any Assembly.

Permanent? According to the influence of courtiers, confessors, mistresses, passions, and interests. Supposing it permanent, that will may be very personal and very oppressive, if, whilst everything is changing about it, it neither change nor improve. How will it be if one same policy, one self-same interest, pass on with generation and tradition throughout a whole dynasty?

The resolutions (*cahiers*) written under very different circumstances granted to the King the sanction and the refusal of sanction. France had trusted to the kingly power against the privileged classes. But were those resolutions to be followed now that same power was their auxiliary? They might as well restore the Bastille.

The sheet-anchor left with the privileged classes was the royal *veto*. They hugged and embraced the King in their shipwreck, wishing him to share their fate, and be saved or drowned with them.

The Assembly discussed the question as if it had been a mere struggle of systems. Paris perceived in it less a question than a crisis, the grand crisis and the total cause of the Revolution, which it was necessary to save or destroy: *To be or not to be*, nothing less.

And Paris alone was right. The revelations of history, and the confessions of the court party, authorise us now in this decision. The 14th of July had wrought no change; the true minister was Breteuil, the Queen's confidant. Necker was there only for show. The Queen was ever looking forward to flight and civil war; her heart was at Metz, in Bouillé's camp. Bouillé's sword was the only *veto* that pleased her.

The Assembly might have been supposed not to have perceived there was a Revolution. Most of the speeches would have served just as well for another century or any other people. One alone will live, that of M. Sièyes, who rejected the *veto*. He stated perfectly well that the real remedy for the reciprocal encroachments of the powers, was not thus to constitute the executive power an arbiter and a judge, but to make an appeal to the constituent power which is in the people. An Assembly may be mistaken; but how many more

chances has not the irrevocable depositary of an hereditary power of being mistaken, wittingly or unwittingly, of following some dynastic or family interest?

He defined the *veto* a simple *lettre-de-cachet* flung by one individual against the general will.

One sensible thing was said by another deputy, which is, that if the Assembly were divided into two Chambers, each having a *veto*, there would be little fear of an abuse of the legislative power; consequently, it was not necessary to oppose to it a new barrier, by giving the *veto* to the King.

There were five hundred votes for a single Chamber; and the dividing into two Chambers could obtain only one hundred. The multitude of nobles who had no chance of entering the upper Chamber, took good care not to create for the grand lords a peerage in the English fashion.

The arguments of those who had the Anglomania, which were then presented with ability by Lally, Mounier, &c., and subsequently obstinately reproduced by Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant, and so many others, had been annihilated beforehand by Sieyès, in a chapter of his book on the *Third Estate* (*Tiers État*). This is truly admirable. That accomplished logician, by the sole power of his mind, not having seen England, and but little acquainted with her history, had already found those results which we obtain from a minute study of her past and present history!* He saw perfectly well that that famous balance of the three powers, which, if real, would prevent any progress whatsoever, is a pure comedy, a mystification, for the profit of one of the powers (aristocratic in England, monarchical in France). England has ever been, is, and will be an aristocracy. The art of that aristocracy, what has perpetuated its power, is not its giving a share to the people, but in finding an exterior field for their activity, to open issues for them;† it is thus it has spread England all over the globe.

* Her past, in my "History of France," wherein I meet with her every moment; her present, in the fine work of Léon Faucher. That book has given the English school a blow from which it will never recover. (See especially towards the end of the second volume). The English themselves (Bentham, Bulwer, Senior, &c.) agree to-day that their famous balance of the three powers is only a theme for schoolboys.

† England would have died, had she not found, from century to century,

As for the *veto*, Necker's opinion which he addressed to the Assembly, that moreover on which it had decided of its own accord, was to grant the *veto* to the King,—the suspensive *veto*; the right of adjourning as far as the second legislature which should follow the one proposing the law.

That Assembly was ripe for dissolution. Created before the great Revolution which had just taken place, it was profoundly heterogeneous and confused, like the chaos of the *ancien régime*, whence it sprang. In spite of the name of National Assembly, with which it had been baptized by Sieyès, it remained feudal, and was nothing else but the ancient States-General. Ages had passed over it, from the 5th of May to the 31st of August. Elected in the 'antique form, and according to barbarous law, it represented some two or three hundred thousand nobles or priests just as much as the nation. By uniting them to itself, the Third Estate had grown weak and feeble. At every instant, even without being even aware of it, it was compromising with them. It adopted scarcely any measures but such as were prejudicial, illegitimate, powerless, and dangerous. The privileged classes, who were manœuvring outside with the court to undo the Revolution, obstructed it still more certainly in the very bosom of the Assembly.

That Assembly, full as it was of talent and science, was nevertheless monstrous, through the irremediable discordance of its elements. What production, or what generation can be expected from a monster?

Such was the language of common sense and reason. The moderate who ought, one would think, to have been more keen-sighted and less dazzled, had no perception of anything. Strange enough, passion took a better view; it perceived that everything was danger and obstacle in this twofold situation, and strove to get clear of it. But as passion and violence it inspired infinite distrust, and met with immense difficulties; it became still more violent in order to surmount them, and that very energy created new obstacles.

an exterior diversion for her interior evil (aristocratic injustice): in the sixteenth and seventeenth, North America and the spoliation of Spain; in the eighteenth, the spoliation of France and the conquest of India; in the nineteenth, a new colonial extension, and an immense manufacturing development.

The monster of the time, I mean the discord of the two principles, their impotency for creating anything vital, must, to be well perceived, be seen in one man. That unity of person, that lofty combination of faculties which is called genius, is of no use, if, in that man—that genius—ideas are warring together, if principles and doctrines carry on a furious struggle in his bosom.

I know not a more melancholy spectacle for human nature than that now presented by Mirabeau. At Versailles he speaks for the absolute *veto*, but in such obscure terms that nobody distinctly understands whether he be for or against it. At Paris his friends maintain, on the same day, at the Palais Royal, that he has opposed the *veto*. He inspired so much personal attachment in the young men about him, that they did not hesitate to lie boldly in order to save him. "I loved him like a mistress," said Camille Desmoulins. It is well known that one of Mirabeau's secretaries tried to commit suicide at his death.

Those liars, exaggerating, as it often happens, falsehood to obtain the more credit, affirmed that on leaving the Assembly he had been waited for, followed, and wounded, having been stabbed with a sword! All the Palais Royal exclaimed that a guard of two hundred men must be voted to guard poor Mirabeau!

In that strange speech* he had maintained the old sophism, that the royal sanction was a guarantee of liberty; that the King was a sort of tribune of the people; their representative—an irrevocable, irresponsible representative—one who is never to be called to account!

He was sincerely a royalist, and, as such, made no scruple to receive later a pension to keep open house for the deputies. He used to say to himself that after all he did but defend his own opinion. One thing, we must confess, corrupted him more than money, a thing which was the least to be suspected in that man so proud in his deportment and his language. What was it? Fear!

* He had received it from a dreamer named Cazeaux. He had not even read it. On reading it at the tribune, he found it so bad that he was bathed in a cold perspiration, and skipped half of it.—Etienne Dumont's *Souvenirs*, p. 155.

Fear of the rising, growing Revolution. He beheld that young giant then prevailing over him, and which subsequently carried him off like another man. And then he cast himself back upon what was called the old order—true anarchy and a real chaos. From that fruitless struggle he was saved by death.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRESS.

Agitation of Paris for the Question of the *Veto*, August 30th.—State of the Press.—Increase of Newspapers.—Tendencies of the Press.—It is still Royalist.—Loustalot, the Editor of the *Révolutions des Paris*.—His Proposition on the 31st of August; Rejected at the Hôtel-de-Ville.—Conspiracy of the Court, known to Lafayette and everybody.—Growing Opposition between the National Guards and the People.—Uncertain Conduct of the Assembly.—Volney proposes its Dissolution, September 18th.—Impotency of Necker, the Assembly, the Court, and the Duke of Orleans.—Even the Press powerless.

WE have just seen two things: the situation of affairs was intolerable, and the Assembly incapable of remedying it.

Would a popular movement settle the difficulty? That could take place only on condition that it was truly a spontaneous, vast, unanimous movement of the people, like that of the 14th of July.

The fermentation was great, the agitation lively, but as yet partial. From the very first day that the question of the *veto* was put (Sunday, August 30), all Paris took alarm, for the absolute *veto* appeared as the annihilation of the sovereignty of the people. However, the Palais Royal alone stood forward. There it was decided that they should go to Versailles, to warn the Assembly that they perceived in its bosom a league for the *veto*, that they knew the members, and that, unless they renounced, Paris would march against them. A few hundred men accordingly set forth at ten in the evening; a pertinacious violent man, the Marquis de Saint-Huruge, a favourite with the crowd on account of his herculean strength and stentorian voice, had placed himself at their head. Having been imprisoned under the old government at the prayer of his wife

(a pretty coquette who possessed some credit), Saint-Huruge, as may be conceived, was already a furious enemy of the *ancien régime*, and an ardent champion of the Revolution. On reaching the Champs-Élysées, his band, already greatly diminished, met with some national guards sent by Lafayette, who prevented their further progress.

The Palais Royal dispatched, one after the other, three or four deputations to the city, to obtain leave to pass. They wanted to make the riot legal, and with the consent of the authority. It is superfluous to say that the latter did not consent.

Meanwhile another attempt, far more serious, was preparing in the Palais Royal. The latter, whatever might be its success, would necessarily have at least the general advantage of introducing the grand question of the day into discussion among the whole people. There was, then, no longer any possibility of its being suddenly decided, or carried by surprise, at Versailles; Paris was observing and watching the Assembly, both by the press and by its own assembly—the great Parisian assembly, united, though divided into its sixty districts.

The author of the proposition was a young journalist. Before relating it, we ought to give an idea of the movement operating among the Press.

This sudden awaking of a people, called all at once to a knowledge of their rights and to decide on their destiny, had absorbed all the activity of the time in journalism. The most speculative minds had been hurried to the field of the practical. Every science, every branch of literature, stood still; political life was everything.

Every great day in '89 was accompanied with an eruption of newspapers:—

1st. In May and June, at the opening of the States-General, a multitude of them spring forth. Mirabeau patronised the *Courrier de Provence*; Gorsas, the *Courrier de Versailles*; Brissot, the *Patriote Français*; Barrière, the *Point du Jour*, &c. &c.

2ndly. On the night before the 14th of July, appeared the most popular of all the newspapers, *Les Révolutions de Paris*, edited by Loustalet.

3rdly. On the eve of the 5th and 6th of October appeared the *Ami du Peuple* (Marat) and the *Annales Patriotiques* (Carra and Mercier). Soon after, the *Courrier de Brabant*, by Camille Desmoulins, certainly the most witty of all; next, one of the most violent, the *Orateur du Peuple*, by Fréron.

The general character of that great movement, and which renders it the more admirable, is, that, in spite of shades of opinion, there is almost unanimity. Except one conspicuous newspaper, the Press presents the appearance of one vast council, in which everybody speaks in his turn, and all being engaged in a common aim, avoid every kind of hostility.

The Press, at that early age, struggling against the central power, has generally a tendency to strengthen the local powers, and to exaggerate the rights of the *commune* against the State. If the language of after-times might be here employed, we should say, that at that period they all seem *fédéralists*. Mirabeau is as much so as Brissot or Lafayette. This goes so far as to admit the independence of the provinces, if liberty become impossible for all France. Mirabeau would be contented to be Count of Provence; he says so in plain terms.

Notwithstanding all this, the Press, struggling against the King, is generally royalist. "At that time," says Camille Desmoulins at a later period, "there were not ten of us republicans in France." We must not allow ourselves to mistake the meaning of certain bold expressions. In '88, the violent d'Eprémesnil had said: "We must *unbourbonise* France." But it was only to make the Parliament king.

Mirabeau, who was destined to complete the sum of contradictions, caused Milton's violent little book against kings to be translated and printed in his name in '89, at the very moment when he was undertaking the defence of royalty. It was suppressed by his friends.

Two men were preaching the Republic: one of the most prolific writers of the period, the indefatigable Brissot, and the brilliant, eloquent, and bold Desmoulins. His book *La France libre* contains a violently satirical brief history of the monarchy. Therein he shows that principle of order and stability to have been, in practice, a perpetual disorder. Hereditary royalty, in order to redeem itself from so many inconveniences which are evidently inherent, has one general reply to everything: *peace*,

the maintenance of peace ; which does not prevent it from having, by minorities and quarrels of succession, kept France in an almost perpetual state of war :—wars with the English, wars with Italy, wars about the succession in Spain, &c.*

Robespierre has said that the Republic has crept in between the parties, without anybody having suspected it. It is more exact to say that royalty itself introduced it, and urged it upon the minds of men. If men refuse to govern themselves, it is because royalty offers itself as a simplification which facilitates, removes impediments, and dispenses with virtue and efforts. But how, if it become itself the obstacle ? It may be boldly affirmed, that royalty taught the Republic, that it hurried France into it, when she distrusted it, and was far from it, even in thought.

To return, the first of the journalists of that day was neither Mirabeau, Camille Desmoulins, Brissot, Condorcet, Mercier, Carra, Gorsas, Marat, nor Barrère. They all published newspapers, and some to a great extent. Mirabeau used to print ten thousand copies of his famous *Courrier de Provence*. But of the *Révolutions de Paris* there were (of some numbers) as many as *two hundred thousand* copies printed. This was the greatest publicity ever obtained. The editor's name did not appear. The printer signed :—Prudhomme. That name has become one of the best known in the world. The unknown editor was Loustalot.

Loustalot, who died in 1792 at the age of twenty-nine, was a serious, honest, laborious young man. A writer of mediocrity, but grave, of an impassioned seriousness ; his real originality was his contrast with the frivolity of the journalists of the time. In his very violence we perceive an effort to be just. He was the writer preferred by the people. Nor was he unworthy of the preference. He gave, in the outbreak of the Revolution, more than one proof of courageous moderation. When the French guards were delivered by the people, he said there was but one solution for the affair ; that the prisoners should betake themselves to prison again, and that the electors and the National

* Sismondi has shown, by an exact calculation on a period of 500 years, how much longer and more frequent wars have been in hereditary than in elective monarchies : this is the natural effect of minorities, quarrels of succession, &c. Sismondi, *Études sur les Constitutions des Peuples libres*, i., 214—221.

Assembly should petition the king to pardon them. When a mistake of the crowd had placed good Lasalle, the brave commandant of the city, in peril, Loustalot undertook his defence, justified him, and restored him to favour. In the affair of the servants who wanted the Savoyards to be driven away, he showed himself firm and severe as well as judicious. A true journalist, he was the man of the day, and not of the morrow. When Camillo Desmoulins published his book, *La France libre*, wherein he suppresses the king, Loustalot, whilst praising him, finds him extravagant, and calls him a man of feverish imagination. Marat, then little known, had violently attacked Bailly in the *Ami du Peuple*, both as a public character and as a man. Loustalot defended him. He considered journalism as a public function, a sort of magistracy. No tendency to abstractions. He lives wholly and entirely in the crowd, and feels their wants and sufferings; he applies himself especially to the consideration of provisions, and to the grand question of the day,—bread. He proposes machines for grinding corn more expeditiously. He visits the unfortunate beings employed at work at Montmartre. And those miserable objects, whose extreme wretchedness had almost divested them of the human form,—that deplorable army of phantoms or skeletons, who inspire rather fear than pity,—wound Loustalot to the heart, and he addresses them in words of affection and tenderest compassion.

Paris could not remain in that position. It was necessary either to restore absolute royalty or found liberty.

On Monday morning, August 31st, Loustalot, finding the minds of the multitude more calm than on the Sunday evening, harangued in the Palais Royal. He said the remedy was not to go to Versailles, and made a less violent yet a bolder proposition. It was to go to the city, obtain the convocation of the districts, and in those assemblies to put these questions:—1st. Does Paris believe that the king has the right of preventing? 2ndly. Does Paris confirm or revoke its deputies? 3dly. If deputies be named, will they have a special mandate to refuse the *veto*? 4thly. If the former deputies be confirmed, cannot the Assembly be induced to adjourn the discussion?

The measure proposed, though eminently revolutionary and illegal (unconstitutional if there had been a constitution), never-

theless was so perfectly adapted to the necessities of the day, that it was, a few days later, reproduced, at least the principal part of it, in the Assembly itself, by one of its most eminent members.

Loustalot and the deputation of the Palais Royal were very badly received, their proposition rejected at the Hôtel-de-Ville, and the next morning accused in the Assembly. A threatening letter, received by the president and signed Saint-Huruge (who, however, maintained it was a forgery), completed the general irritation. They caused Saint-Huruge to be arrested, and the National Guard took advantage of a momentary tumult to shut up the Café de Foy. Meetings in the Palais Royal were forbidden and dispersed by the municipal authority.

The piquant part of the affair is that the executor of these measures, M. de Lafayette, was, at that time and always, a republican in heart. Throughout his life he dreamed of the republic and served royalty. A democratical royalty, or a royal democracy, appeared to him a necessary transition. To undeceive him it required no less than two experiments.

The court trifled with Necker and the Assembly. It did not deceive Lafayette; and yet he served it, and kept Paris in check. The horror of the former acts of violence of the people, and the bloodshed, made him recoil before the idea of another 14th of July. But would the civil war which the court was preparing have cost less blood? A serious and delicate question for the friend of humanity.

He was acquainted with everything. On the 13th of September, whilst receiving old Admiral d'Estaing, the commander of the National Guards of Versailles, to dinner at his house, he told him news of Versailles of which he was ignorant. That honest man, who thought he was very deep in the confidence of the king and the queen, now learned that they had returned to the fatal project of taking the king to Metz, that is to say, of beginning a civil war; that Breteuil was preparing everything in concert with the ambassador of Austria; that they were bringing towards Versailles the musketeers, the *gendarmes*, nine thousand of the king's household, two thirds of whom were noblemen; that they were to seize on Montargis, where they would be joined by the Baron de Vioménil, a man of action. The latter, who had served in almost all the wars

of the century, recently in that of America, had cast himself violently into the counter-revolution party, perhaps out of jealousy for Lafayette, who seemed to be playing the first part in the Revolution. Eighteen regiments, and especially the *Carabiniers*, had not taken the oath. That was enough to block up all the roads to Paris, cut off its supplies, and famish it. They were no longer in want of money; they had collected and enforced it from all sides; they made sure of having fifteen hundred thousand francs a month. The clergy would supply the remainder; a steward of the Benedictines was bound, for himself alone, in the sum of one hundred thousand crowns.*

The old Admiral wrote to the queen on the Monday (14th): "I have always slept well the night before a naval battle, but since this terrible revelation, I have not been able to close my eyes." On hearing it at M. de Lafayette's table, he shuddered lest any one of the servants should hear it: "I remarked to him that one word from his mouth might become the signal of death." To which Lafayette, with his American coolness, replied: "That it would be advantageous for *one* to die for the salvation of all." The only head in peril would have been the queen's.

The Spanish ambassador said as much to d'Estaing; he knew it all from a considerable personage to whom they had proposed for his signature a list of association which the court caused to be circulated.

Thus, this profound secret, this mystery, was spread through the saloons on the 13th, and about the streets from the 14th to the 16th. On the 16th, the grenadiers of the French Guards, now become a paid national guard, declared they would go to Versailles to resume their old duties, to guard the Château and the king. On the 22nd, the grand plot was printed in the *Révolutions de Paris*, and read by all France.

M. de Lafayette, who believed himself *strong, too strong*, according to his own expressions, wished on one hand to check the Court by making them afraid of Paris, and on the other hand, to check Paris, and repress agitation by his National Guards. He used and abused their zeal, in quieting the rabble,

* Three hundred thousand francs, or 12,000*l.* sterling.—C. C.

imposing silence on the Palais Royal, and preventing mobs ; he carried on a petty police warfare of annoyance against a crowd excited by the fears which he himself shared ; he knew of the plot, and yet he dispersed and arrested those who spoke of it. He managed so well that he created the most fatal animosity between the National Guards and the people. The latter began to remark that the chiefs, the commanders, were nobles, rich men, people of consequence. The National Guards in general, reduced in number, proud of their uniform and their arms, new to them, appeared to the people a sort of aristocracy. Being citizens and merchants, they were great sufferers by the riots, receiving nothing from their country estates, and gaining nothing ; they were every day called out, fatigued, and jaded ; every day, they wanted to bring matters to an end, and they testified their impatience by some act of brutality which set the crowd against them. Once, they drew their swords against a mob of peruke-makers, and there was bloodshed ; on another occasion, they arrested some persons who had indulged in jokes about the National Guard. A girl, having said she did not care for them, was taken and whipped.

The people were exasperated to such a degree, that they brought against the National Guard the strangest accusation—that of favouring the Court, and being in the plot of Versailles.

Lafayette was no hypocrite, but his position was equivocal. He prevented the grenadiers from going to Versailles to resume their duties as the king's guards, and gave warning to the minister, Saint-Priest (September 17th). His letter was turned to advantage. They showed it to the municipality of Versailles, making them take an oath of secrecy, and inducing them to ask that the regiment of Flanders should be sent for. They solicited the same step from a part of the National Guards of Versailles, but the majority refused.

That regiment, strongly suspected, because it had hitherto refused to take the new oath, arrived with its cannon, ammunition, and baggage, and entered Versailles with much noise. At the same time, the Château detained the body guards, who had concluded their service, in order to have double the number. A crowd of officers of every grade were daily arriving *en poste*, as the old nobility used to do on the eve of a battle, fearing to arrive too late.

Paris was uneasy. The French Guards were indignant ; they had been tried and tampered with without any other result than to put them on their guard. Bailly could not help speaking at the Hôtel-de-Ville. A deputation was sent, headed by the good old Dussaulx, to convey to the king the alarms of Paris.

The conduct of the Assembly in the meantime was strange. Now it seemed to be asleep, and then it would suddenly start up ; one day violent, on the next moderate and timid.

One morning, the 12th of September, it remembers the 4th of August, and the grand social revolution it had voted. It was five weeks since the decrees had been given ; all France spoke of them with joy ; but the Assembly said not one word about them. On the 12th, whilst a decree was being proposed in which the judicial committee demanded *that the laws should be put in force conformably to a decision of the 4th of August*, a deputy of Franche-Comté broke the ice and said : "*Steps are being taken to prevent the promulgation of those decrees of the 4th of August ; it is said they are not to appear. It is time they should be seen, furnished with the royal seal. The people are waiting.*" Those words were quickly taken up. The Assembly was roused. Malouet, the orator of the moderate party—of the constitutional royalists,—even he (singularly enough) supported the proposition, and others with them. In spite of the Abbé Maury, it was decided that the decrees of the 4th of August should be presented for the king's sanction.

This sudden movement, this aggressive disposition of even the moderates, inclines one to suppose that the most influential members were not ignorant of what Lafayette, the Spanish ambassador, and many others, were saying at Paris.

The Assembly seemed on the morrow astonished at its vigour. Many thought that the Court would never let the king sanction the decrees of the 4th of August, and foresaw that his refusal would provoke a terrible movement—a second fit of the Revolution. Mirabeau, Chapelier, and others, maintained that these decrees, not being properly laws, but principles of constitution, had no need of the royal sanction ; that the promulgation was sufficient. A bold, yet timid opinion : bold, in doing without the king ; timid, in dispensing with

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his examining, sanctioning, or refusing: no refusal, no collision. Things would have been decided *ipso facto*, according as either party was predominant in this or that province. Here, they would have applied the decisions of the 4th of August, as decreed by the Assembly; there, they would have eluded them, as not sanctioned by the king.

On the 15th, the royal inviolability, hereditary right, was voted by acclamation, as if to dispose the king in their favour. They nevertheless received from him a dilatory, equivocal reply relative to the 4th of August. He sanctioned nothing, but discussed, blaming this, commending that, and admitting scarcely any article without some modification. The whole bore the impress of Necker's usual style, his tergiversation, blunders, and half measures. The Court, that was preparing something very different, apparently expected to captivate public attention by this empty answer. The Assembly was in great agitation. Chapelier, Mirabeau, Robespierre, Petion, and others usually less energetic, affirmed that in demanding the sanction for these preliminary articles, the Assembly expected only a pure and simple promulgation. Then, a great discussion, and an unexpected, but very sensible motion from Volney: "This Assembly is too mixed in interests and passions. Let us determine the new conditions of election, and retire." Applause, but nothing more. Mirabeau objects that the Assembly has sworn not to separate before having formed the constitution.

On the 21st, the king being pressed to promulgate, laid aside all circumlocution; the Court apparently believed itself stronger. He replied that *promulgation* belonged only to laws *invested with forms which procure their execution* (he meant to say *sanctioned*); that he was going to order the *publication*, and that he did not doubt but the laws which the Assembly would decree, would be such as he could *sanction*.

On the 24th, Necker came to make his confession to the Assembly. The first loan, thirty millions, had given but *two*. The second, eighty, had given but *ten*. The *general of finance*, as Necker's friends called him in their pamphlets, had been able to do nothing; the credit which he expected to control and restore had perished in spite of him. He came to appeal to the devotion of the nation. The only remedy was

that she should enforce it herself, that everybody should tax himself at a fourth of his income.*

Necker had now ended his part. After having tried every reasonable means, he trusted himself to the faith, the miracle, the vague hope that a people unable to pay less was about to pay more, and that they would tax themselves with the monstrous impost of a quarter of their revenue. The chimerical financier brought forward as the last word of his balance-sheet, as cash, a Utopia which the good Abbé of Saint-Pierre would not have proposed.

The impotent willingly believes in the impossible ; being incapacitated from acting himself, he imagines that chance, or some unknown and unforeseen accident, will act for him. The Assembly, no less impotent than the minister, shared his credulity. A wonderful speech from Mirabeau overcame all their doubts, and transported them out of their senses. He showed them bankruptcy, a hideous bankruptcy opening its monstrous abyss beneath them, and ready to devour both themselves and France. They voted. If the measure had been serious, if money had come in, the effect would have been singular : Necker would have succeeded in relieving those who were to drive Necker away, and the Assembly would have paid a war in order to dissolve the Assembly. Impossibility, contradiction, a perfect stand-still in every direction, was fundamentally the state of things for every man and every party. To sum up all in one word : nothing comes of nothing (*nul ne peut.*)

The Assembly can do nothing. Discordant in elements and principles, it was naturally incapable ; but it becomes still more so in presence of tumult, at the entirely novel noise of the press which drowns its voice. It would willingly cling to the royal power which it has demolished ; but its ruins are hostile : they would like to crush the Assembly. Thus Paris makes them afraid, and so does the Château. After the king's refusal, they dare no longer show their anger for fear of adding to the indignation of Paris. Except the responsibility of the ministers which they decree, they do nothing at all consonant with the situation of affairs ; the dividing of France into depart-

* Necker, ever generous, for his own part exceeded the quarter ; he taxed himself at one hundred thousand francs (£4000.)

ments, and the criminal law, are discussed in empty space ; the hall is thinly attended ; scarcely do six hundred members assemble, and it is to give the presidency to Mounier, a personification of immobility ; to him who expresses the best all the difficulties of acting, and the general paralysis.

Can the Court do anything ? They think so at that moment. They see the nobility and clergy rallying around them. They perceive the Duke of Orleans unsupported in the Assembly ; * they behold him, at Paris, spending much money, and gaining but little ground ; his popularity is surpassed by Lafayette.

All were ignorant of the situation, all overlooked the general force of things, and attributed events to some person or other, ridiculously exaggerating individual power. According to its hatred or its love, passion believes miracles, monsters, heroes. The Court accuse Orleans or Lafayette of everything. Lafayette himself, though naturally firm and cool-headed, becomes imaginative ; he is not far from believing likewise that all the disturbances are the work of the Palais Royal. A visionary appears on the press, the credulous, blind, furious Marat, who will vent accusations dictated at random by his dreams, designating one to-day, and to-morrow another to death ; he begins by affirming that the whole famine is the work of one man ; that Necker buys up corn on every side, in order that Paris may have none.

Marat is only beginning, however ; as yet he has but little influence. He stands conspicuously apart from all the press. The press accuses, but vaguely ; it complains, and is angry, like the people, without too well knowing what ought to be done. It sees plainly in general that there will be " a second fit of the Revolution." But how ? For what precise object ? It cannot exactly say. For the prescription of remedies, the press,—that young power, suddenly grown so great through the impotency of the others,—the press itself is powerless.

It does but little during the interval previous to the 5th of October ; the Assembly does little, and the Hôtel-de-Ville little. And yet everybody plainly perceives that some grand deed is about to be achieved. Mirabeau, on receiving one day his

* In regulating the succession, the Assembly spared its rival the King of Spain, declaring it brought no prejudice to the renunciations of the Bourbons of Spain to the crown of France.

bookseller of Versailles, sends away his three secretaries, shuts the door, and says to him : "My dear Blaisot, you will see here soon some great calamity—bloodshed. From friendship, I wished to give you warning. But be not afraid ; there is no danger for honest men like you."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PEOPLE GO TO FETCH THE KING, OCTOBER 5, 1789.

The People alone find a Remedy : they go to fetch the King.—Egotistical Position of the Kings at Versailles.—Louis XVI. was unable to act in any way.—The Queen is solicited to act.—Orgy of the Body Guards, October 1st.—Insults offered to the National Cockade.—Irritation of Paris.—Misery and Sufferings of the Women.—Their courageous Compassion.—They invade the Hôtel-de-Ville, October 5th.—They march against Versailles.—The Assembly receives Warning.—Maillard and the Women before the Assembly.—Robespierre supports Maillard.—The Women before the King.—Indecision of the Court.

On the 5th of October, eight or ten thousand women went to Versailles, followed by crowds of people. The National Guard forced M. de Lafayette to lead them there the same evening. On the 6th, they brought back the king, and obliged him to inhabit Paris.

This grand movement is the most general, after the 14th of July, that occurs in the Revolution. The one of October was unanimous, almost as much so as the other ; at least in this sense, that they who took no part in it wished for its success, and all rejoiced that the king should be at Paris.

Here we must not seek the action of parties. They acted, but did very little.

The real, the certain cause, for the women and the most miserable part of the crowd, was nothing but hunger. Having dismounted a horseman at Versailles, they killed and ate his horse almost raw.

For the majority of the men, both the people and the National Guards, the cause of the movement was honour, the outrage of the Court against the Parisian cockade, adopted by all France as a symbol of the Revolution.

Whether the men, however, would have marched against

Versailles, if the women had not preceded them, is doubtful. Nobody before them had the idea of going to fetch the king. The Palais Royal, on the 30th of August, departed with Saint-Huruge, but it was to convey complaints and threats to the Assembly then discussing the *veto*. But here, the people alone are the first to propose ; alone, they depart to take the king, as alone they took the Bastille. What is most *people* in the people, I mean most instinctive and inspired, is assuredly the women. Their idea was this : " Bread is wanting, let us go and fetch the king ; they will take care, if he be with us, that bread be wanting no longer. Let us go and fetch *the baker* ! "

A word of simple yet profound meaning ! The king ought to live with the people, see their sufferings, suffer with them, and be of the same household with them. The ceremonies of marriage and those of the coronation used to coincide in several particulars ; the king espoused the people. If royalty is not tyranny, there must be marriage and community, and the couple must live, according to the low but energetic motto of the middle ages, " With one loaf and one pot. " *

Was not the egotistical solitude in which the kings were kept, with an artificial crowd of gilded beggars in order to make them forget the people, something strange and unnatural, and calculated to harden their hearts ? How can we be surprised if those kings became estranged, hard-hearted, and barbarous ? How could they, without their isolated retreat at Versailles, ever have attained that degree of insensibility ? The very sight of it is immoral : a world made expressly for one man ! There only could a man forget the condition of humanity, and sign, like Louis XIV., the expulsion of a million of men ; or, like Louis XV., speculate on famine.

The unanimity of Paris had overthrown the Bastille. To conquer the king and the Assembly, it was necessary that it should find itself once more unanimous. The National Guard and the people were beginning to divide. In order to re-unite them, and make them concur for the same end, it required no less than a provocation from the Court. No political wisdom would have brought about the event ; an act of folly was necessary.

* See my *Origines du Droit : symboles et formules juridiques*.

That was the real remedy, the only means of getting rid of the intolerable position in which everybody seemed entangled. This folly would have been done by the queen's party long before, if it had not met with its chief stumbling-block and difficulty in Louis XVI. Nobody could be more averse to a change of habits. To deprive him of his hunting, his workshop, and his early hour of retiring to rest; to interrupt the regularity of his meals and prayers; to put him on horseback *en campagne*, and make an active partisan of him, as we see Charles I., in the picture by Vandyck, was not easy. His own good sense likewise told him that he ran much risk in declaring himself against the National Assembly.

On the other hand, this same attachment to his habits, to the ideas of his education and childhood, made him against the Revolution even more than the diminution of the royal authority. He did not conceal his displeasure at the demolition of the Bastille.* The uniform of the National Guards worn by his own people; his valets now become lieutenants—officers; more than one musician of the chapel chanting mass in a captain's uniform; all that annoyed his sight: he caused his servants to be forbidden "to appear in his presence in such an unseasonable costume."†

It was difficult to move the king, either one way or the other. In every deliberation, he was very fluctuating, but in his old habits, and in his rooted ideas, insuperably obstinate. Even the queen, whom he dearly loved, would have gained nothing by persuasion. Fear had still less influence upon him; he knew he was the anointed of the Lord, inviolable and sacred; what could he fear?

Meanwhile, the queen was surrounded by a whirlwind of passions, intrigues, and interested zeal; prelates and lords, all that aristocracy who had so aspersed her character, and now were trying to effect a reconciliation, crowded her apartments, fervently conjuring her to save the monarchy. She alone, if they were to be believed, possessed genius and courage; it was time that she, the daughter of Maria-Theresa, should show herself. The queen derived courage, moreover, from two very different sorts of people; on one hand, brave and worthy chevaliers of

* Alexandre de Lameth.

† Campan, ii.

Saint-Louis, officers or provincial noblemen, who offered her their swords; on the other, projectors and schemers, who showed plans, undertook to execute them, and warranted success. Versailles was as if besieged by these Figaros of royalty.

It was necessary to make a holy league, and for all honest people to rally round the queen. The king would then be carried away in the enthusiasm of their love, and unable to resist any longer. The revolutionary party could make but one campaign; once conquered, it would perish: on the contrary, the other party, comprising all the large proprietors, was able to suffice for several campaigns, and maintain the war for many years. For such arguments to be good, it was only necessary to suppose that the unanimity of the people would not affect the soldier, and that he would never remember that he also was the people.

The spirit of jealousy then rising between the National Guard and the people doubtless emboldened the Court, and made them believe Paris to be powerless; they risked a premature manifestation which was destined to ruin them. Fresh body guards were arriving, for their three months' service; these men, unacquainted with Paris or the Assembly, strangers to the new spirit, good provincial royalists, imbued with all their family prejudices, and paternal and maternal recommendations to serve the king, and the king alone. That body of guards, though some of its members were friends of liberty, had not taken the oath, and still wore the white cockade. By them, they attempted to entice away the officers of the regiment of Flanders, and those of a few other troops. In order to bring them all together, a grand dinner was given, to which were admitted a few officers selected from the National Guard of Versailles, whom they hoped to attach to their cause.

We must know that the town in France which had the greatest detestation for the Court, was the one that saw most of it, namely, Versailles. Whoever was not a servant or an *employé* belonging to the Château was a revolutionist. The constant sight of all that pomp, of those splendid equipages, and those haughty, supercilious people, engendered envy and hatred. This disposition of the inhabitants had caused them to name one Lecointre, a linendraper, a firm patriot, but other-

wise a spiteful, virulent man, as lieutenant-colonel of their National Guard. The invitation sent to a few of the officers was but little flattering to them, and a cause of great dissatisfaction to the others.

A military repast might have been given in the Orangerie or anywhere else ; but the king (an unprecedented favour) granted the use of his magnificent theatre, in which no *fête* had been given since the visit of the emperor Joseph II. Wines are lavished with royal prodigality. They drink the health of the king, the queen, and the dauphin ; somebody, in a low, timid voice, proposed that of the nation ; but nobody would pay any attention. At the dessert, the grenadiers of the regiment of Flanders, the Swiss, and other soldiers are introduced. They all drink and admire, dazzled by the fantastical brilliancy of that singular fairy scene, where the boxes, lined with looking-glasses, reflect a blaze of light in every direction.

The doors open. Behold the king and the queen ! The king has been prevailed on to visit them on his return from the chase. The queen walks round to every table, looking beautiful, and adorned with the child she bears in her arms. All those young men are delighted, transported out of their senses. The queen, we must confess, less majestic at other periods, had never discouraged those who devoted their hearts to her service ; she had not disdained to wear in her head-dress a plume from Lauzun's helmet.* There was even a tradition that the bold declaration of a private in the body guards had been listened to without anger ; and that, without any other punishment than a benevolent irony, the queen had obtained his promotion.

So beautiful, and yet so unfortunate ! As she was departing with the king, the band played the affecting air : " O Richard, O my king, abandoned by the whole world ! " Every heart melted at that appeal. Several tore off their cockades, and took that of the queen, the black Austrian cockade, devoting themselves to her service. At the very least, the tri-color cockade was turned inside out, so as to appear white. The

* What does it signify whether Lauzun offered it, or she had asked for it ? See *Mémoires de Campan*, and Lauzun (*Revue rétrospective*), &c.

music continued, ever more impassioned and ardent : it played the *Marche des Hulans*, and sounded the charge. They all leaped to their feet, looking about for the enemy. No enemy appeared ; for want of adversaries they scaled the boxes, rushed out, and reached the marble court. Perseval, aide-de-camp to d'Estaing, scales the grand balcony, and makes himself master of the interior posts, shouting, "They are our prisoners." He adorns himself with the white cockade. A grenadier of the regiment of Flanders likewise ascends, and Perseval tore off and gave him a decoration which he then wore. A dragon wanted also to ascend, but being unsteady, he tumbled down, and would have killed himself in his despair.

To complete the scene, another, half drunk and half mad, goes shouting about that he is a spy of the Duke of Orleans, and inflicts a slight wound upon himself ; his companions were so disgusted that they kicked him almost to death.

The frenzy of that mad orgy seemed to infect the whole court. The queen, on presenting flags to the National Guards of Versailles, said "that she was still enchanted with it." On the 3rd of October, another dinner ; they grow more daring, their tongues are untied, and the counter-revolution showed itself boldly ; several of the National Guards withdrew in indignation. The costume of National Guard is no longer received in the palace. "You have no feeling," said one officer to another, "to wear such a dress." In the long gallery, and in the apartments, the ladies no longer allow the tricolor cockade to circulate. With their handkerchiefs and ribands they make white cockades, and tie them themselves. The damsels grow so bold as to receive the vows of these new chevaliers, and allow them to kiss their hands. "Take this cockade," said they, "and guard it well ; it is the true one, and alone shall be triumphant." How could they refuse, from such lovely hands, that symbol, that *souvenir* ? And yet it is civil war and death : to-morrow, La Vendée ! That fair and almost infantine form, standing by the aunts of the king, will be Madame de Lescure and De la Rochejaquelin.*

The brave National Guards of Versailles had much ado to

* She was then at Versailles. See the novel, true in this particular, which M. de Barante has published in her name.

defend themselves. One of their captains had been, willingly or unwillingly, decked out by the ladies with an enormous white cockade. His colonel, Lecointre, the linendraper, was furious. "Those cockades," said he, firmly, "shall be changed, and within a week, or all is lost." He was right. Who could mistake the omnipotence of the symbol? The three colours were the 14th of July and the victory of Paris, the Revolution itself. Thereupon a chevalier of Saint-Louis runs after Lecointre, declaring himself the champion of the white cockade against all comers. He follows, lies in wait for him, and insults him. This passionate defender of the *ancien régime* was not, however, a Montmorency, but simply the son-in-law of the queen's flower-girl.

Lecointre marches off to the Assembly, and requests the military committee to require the oath from the body guard. Some old guards there present declared that it could never be obtained. The committee did nothing, fearful of occasioning some collision and bloodshed; but it was precisely this prudence that occasioned it.

Paris felt keenly the insult offered to its cockade; it was said to have been ignominiously torn to pieces and trodden under foot. On the very day of the second dinner (Saturday evening, the 3rd) Danton was thundering at the club of the Cordeliers. On Sunday, there was a general onslaught on black or white cockades. Mobs of people and citizens, where coats and jackets appeared mingled together, took place in the *cafés*, before the doors of the *cafés*, in the Palais Royal, at the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, at the ends of the bridges, and on the quays. Terrible rumours were in circulation about the approaching war; on the league of the queen and the princes with the German princes; on the foreign uniforms, red and green, then seen in Paris; on the supplies of flour from Corbeil, which came now only every other day; on the inevitably increasing scarcity, and on the approaching severe winter. There is no time to be lost, said they; if people want to prevent war and famine, the king must be brought here; otherwise the Court will carry him off.

Nobody felt all that more keenly than the women. The family, the household, had then become a scene of extreme suffering. A lady gave the alarm on the evening of Saturday,

the 3rd. Seeing her husband was not sufficiently listened to, she ran to the Café de Foy, there denounced the anti-national cockades, and exposed the public danger. On Monday a young girl took a drum into the markets, beat the *générale*, and marched off all the women in the quarter.

Such things are seen only in France ; our women are brave, and make others so. The country of Joan of Arc, Joan of Montfort, and Joan Hachette, can quote a hundred heroines. There was one at the Bastille, who afterwards departed for war, and was made captain in the artillery ; her husband was a soldier. On the 18th of July, when the king went to Paris, many of the women were armed. The women were in the van of our Revolution. We must not be surprised ; they suffered more.

Great miseries are ferocious ; they strike the weak rather than the strong ; they ill-treat children and women rather than men. The latter come and go, boldly hunt about, set their wits to work, and at length find at least sufficient for the day. Women, poor women, live, for the most part, shut up, sitting, knitting or sewing ; they are not fit, on the day when everything is wanting, to seek their living. It is cruel to think that woman, the dependent being, who can live only in company, is more often alone than man. He finds company everywhere, and forms new connexions. But she is nothing without family. And yet her family overwhelms her ; all the burden falls upon her. She remains in her cold, desolate, unfurnished lodging, with her children weeping, or sick and dying, who will weep no more. A thing little remarked, but which gives perhaps the greatest pang to the maternal heart, is, that the child is unjust. Accustomed to find in the mother a universal all-sufficient providence, he taxes her cruelly, unfeelingly, for whatever is wanting, is noisy and angry, adding to her grief a greater agony.

Such is the mother. Let us take into account also many lonely girls, sad creatures, without any family or support, who, too ugly, or virtuous, have neither friend nor lover, know none of the joys of life. Should their little work be no longer able to support them, they know not how to make up the deficiency, but return to their garret and wait ; sometimes they are found dead, chance revealing the fact to a neighbour.

These unfortunate beings possess not even enough energy to complain, to make known their situation, and protest against their fate. Such as act and agitate in times of great distress, are the strong, the least exhausted by misery, poor rather than indigent. Generally, the intrepid ones, who then make themselves conspicuous, are women of a noble heart, who suffer little for themselves, but much for others; pity, inert and passive in men, who are more resigned to the sufferings of others, is in women a very active, violent sentiment, which occasionally becomes heroic, and impels them imperatively towards the boldest achievements.

On the 5th of October, there was a multitude of unfortunate creatures who had eaten nothing for thirty hours.* That painful sight affected everybody, yet nobody did anything for them; everybody contented themselves with deploring the hard necessity of the times. On Sunday evening (4th) a courageous woman, who could not behold this any longer, ran from the quarter Saint-Denis to the Palais Royal, forced her way through a noisy crowd of orators, and obtained a hearing. She was a woman of thirty-six years of age, well dressed and respectable, but powerful and intrepid. She wants them to go to Versailles, and she will march at their head. Some laugh at her; she boxes the ears of one of them for doing so. The next morning she departed among the foremost, sword in hand, took a cannon from the city, sat astride on it, and, with the match ready lit, rode off to Versailles.

Among the failing trades which seemed to be perishing with the *ancien régime* was that of carvers of wood. There used to be much work of that kind, both for the churches and apartments. Many women were sculptors. One of them, Madeleine Chabry, being quite out of work, had set up as a flower-girl (*bouquetière*) in the quarter of the Palais Royal, under the name of Louison; she was a girl of seventeen, handsome and witty. One may boldly venture to state that it was not hunger that drove her to Versailles. She followed the general impulse, and the dictates of her good courageous heart.

* See the depositions of the witnesses, *Moniteur*, i., p. 568, col. 2. This is the principal source. Another, very important, abounding in details, and which everybody copies, without quoting it, is the *Histoire de deux Amis de la Liberté*, t. iii.

The women placed her at their head and made her their orator.

There were many others who were not driven by hunger: shopwomen, portresses, girls of the town, compassionate and charitable, as they so often are. There was also a considerable number of market-women; the latter were strict Royalists, but they wanted so much the more to have the king at Paris. They had already been to see him, on some occasion or other, some time before; they had spoken to him with much affection, with a laughable yet touching familiarity, which showed a perfect sense of the situation of affairs: "Poor man," said they, looking at the king, "poor dear man, good papa!" And to the queen more seriously: "Madam, madam, take compassion, —let us be free with each other. Let us conceal nothing, but say frankly what we have to say."

These market-women are not those who suffer much from misery: their trade consisting of the necessaries of life is subject to less variation. But they see wretchedness more than anybody, and feel it; passing their lives in the public streets, they do not, like us, escape the scenes of suffering. Nobody is more compassionate or kinder towards the wretchedly poor. With their clownish forms and rude and violent language, they have often a noble heart overflowing with good nature. We have seen our women of Picardy, poor fruit-women of the market of Amiens, save the father of four children, who was going to be guillotined. It was at the time of the coronation of Charles X.; they left their business and their families, went off to Reims, made the king weep with compassion, obtained the pardon, and on their return, making an abundant subscription among themselves, sent away the father, with his wife and children, safe, and loaded with presents.

On the 5th of October, at seven in the morning, they heard the beating of a drum, and could no longer resist. A little girl had taken a drum from the guard-house, and was beating the *générale*. It was Monday; the markets were deserted, and all marched forth. "We will bring back," said they, "*the baker and the baker's wife*. And we shall have the pleasure of hearing our *little daring mother Mirabeau*."

The market people march forth, and the Faubourg Saint-

Antoine, on the other hand, was likewise marching. On the road, the women hurry along with them all they happen to meet, threatening such as are unwilling that they will cut their hair off. First they go to the Hôtel-de-Ville. There a baker had just been brought who used to give false weight of seven ounces in a two pound loaf. The lamp was lowered. Though the man was guilty on his own confession, the National Guard contrived to let him escape. They presented their bayonets to the four or five hundred women already assembled. On the other side, at the bottom of the square, stood the cavalry of the National Guard. The women were by no means daunted. They charged infantry and cavalry with a shower of stones; but the soldiers could not make up their minds to fire on them. The women then forced open the Hôtel-de-Ville, and entered all the offices. Many of them were well dressed: they had put on white gowns for that grand day. They inquired curiously into the use of every room, and entreated the representatives of the districts to give a kind reception to the women they had forced to accompany them, several of whom were *enceints*, and ill, perhaps from fear. Others, ravenous and wild, shouted out *Bread and arms!*—that the men were cowards,—and they would show them what courage was.—That the people of the Hôtel-de-Ville were only fit to be hanged,—that they must burn their writings and waste paper. And they were going to do so, and to burn the building perhaps. A man stopped them, —a man of gigantic stature, dressed in black, and whose serious countenance seemed more sombre than his dress. At first they were going to kill him, thinking he belonged to the town, and calling him a traitor. He replied he was no traitor, but a bailiff by profession, and one of the conquerors of the Bastille. It was Stanislas Maillard.

Early that morning, he had done good service in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. The volunteers of the Bastille under the command of Hullin, were drawn up on the square in arms. The workmen who were demolishing the fortress believed they were sent against them. Maillard interposed and prevented the collision. At the Hôtel-de-Ville, he was lucky enough to prevent its being burnt. The women even promised they would not allow any men to enter: they had left armed sentinels at the grand entrance. At eleven o'clock, the men attacked

the small door which opened under the arcade Saint-Jean. Armed with levers, hammers, hatchets, and pick-axes, they broke open the door, and forced the magazine of arms. Among them was a French guardsman, who had wanted in the morning to ring the tocsin, and had been caught in the act. He had, he said, escaped by miracle; the moderate party, as furious as the others, would have hung him had it not been for the women; he showed his bare neck, which they had relieved from the rope. By way of retaliation, they took a man of the Hôtel-de-Ville in order to hang him. It was the brave Abbé Lefebvre, who had distributed the gunpowder on the 14th of July. Some women, or men disguised as women, hung him accordingly to the little steeple; one of them cut the rope, and he fell, alive and only stunned, into a room twenty-five feet below.

Neither Bailly nor Lafayette had arrived. Maillard repaired to the aide-major-general and told him there was only one way of ending the business, which was that he, Maillard, should lead the women to Versailles. That journey will give time to collect the troops. He descends, beats the drum, and obtains a hearing. The austere tragical countenance of that tall man in black was very effective in La Grève; he appeared a prudent man, and likely to bring matters to a successful issue. The women, who were already departing with the cannon of the town, proclaimed him their captain. He put himself at their head with eight or ten drums; seven or eight thousand women followed, with a few hundred armed men, and a company of the volunteers of the Bastille brought up the rear.

On arriving at the Tuileries, Maillard wanted to follow the quay, but the women wished to pass triumphantly under the clock, through the palace and the garden. Maillard, an observer of ceremony, told them to remember that it was the king's house and garden; and that to pass through without permission was insulting the king.* He politely approached the Swiss guard, and told him that those ladies merely wished to pass through, without doing any mischief. The Swiss drew his sword and rushed upon Maillard, who drew his. A portress gave a lucky stroke with a stick; the Swiss fell, and a man held his bayonet to his breast. Maillard stopped him, coolly

* *Déposition de Maillard, Moniteur, i., p. 572.*

disarmed them both, and carried off the bayonet and the swords.

The morning was passing, and their hunger increased. At Chaillot, Auteuil, and Sèvres, it was very difficult to prevent the poor starving women from stealing food. Maillard would not allow it. At Sèvres the troop was exhausted; there, there was nothing to be had, not even for money; every door was closed except one, that of a sick man who had remained; Maillard contrived to buy of him a few pitchers of wine. Then, he choose out seven men, and charged them to bring before him the bakers of Sèvres, with whatever they might have. There were eight loaves in all, thirty-two pounds of bread for eight thousand persons. They shared them among them and crawled further. Fatigue induced most of the women to lay aside their arms. Maillard, moreover, made them understand that as they wished to pay a visit to the king and the Assembly, and to move and affect them, it was not proper to arrive in such a warlike fashion. The cannon were placed in the rear, and in a manner concealed. The sage bailiff wished it to be an *amener sans scandale*, as they say in courts of law. At the entrance of Versailles, in order to hint their pacific intention, he gave a signal to the women to sing the air of Henri IV.

The people of Versailles were delighted, and cried *Vivent nos Parisiennes!* Foreigners among the spectators saw nothing but what was innocent in that crowd coming to ask the king for succour. The Genevese Dumont, a man unfriendly to the Revolution, who was dining at the palace *Des Petites-Écuries*, looking out of window, says himself: "All that crowd only wanted bread."

The Assembly had been that day full of stormy discussions. The king, being unwilling to *sanction* either the declaration of rights, or the decrees of the 4th of August, replied that constitutional laws could be judged only in their *ensemble*; that he *acceded*, however, in consideration of the alarming circumstances, and on the express condition that the executive power would resume all its force.

"If you accept the king's letter," said Robespierre, there is no longer any constitution, nor any right to have one." Dupont,

Grégoire, and other deputies speak in the same manner. Pétion mentions and blames the orgy of the body guards. A deputy, who had himself served among them, demands, for their honour, that the denunciation be stated in a regular form, and that the guilty parties be prosecuted. "I will denounce," cried Mirabeau, "and I will sign, if the Assembly declare that the person of the king is *alone* inviolable." This was designating the queen. The whole Assembly recoiled from the motion, which was withdrawn. On such a day, it would have provoked assassination.

Mirabeau himself was not free from uneasiness for his backsliding, and his speech on the *veto*. He approached the president, and said to him in an under tone: "Mounier, Paris is marching against us,—believe me or not, forty thousand men are marching against us. Feign illness, go to the palace, and give them this notice; there is not a moment to be lost." "Is Paris marching?" said Mounier, drily (he thought Mirabeau was one of the authors of the movement). "Well! so much the better! we shall have a republic the sooner."

The Assembly decide that they will send to the king to request the mere and simple acceptance of the Declaration of Rights. At three o'clock, Target announces that a crowd had appeared before the doors on the *Avenue de Paris*.

Everybody was acquainted with the event, except the king. He had departed for the chase that morning as usual, and was hunting in the woods of Meudon. They sent after him. Meanwhile, they beat the *générale*, the body guards mounted their horses on the *Place d'Armes*, and stood with their backs to the iron gates; the regiment of Flanders below, on their right, near the *Avenue de Sceaux*. M. d'Estaing, in the name of the municipality of Versailles, orders the troops to act in concert with the National Guard, and oppose the rioters. The municipality had carried their precaution so far as to authorize d'Estaing to follow the king, if he went far, on the singular condition of bringing him back to Versailles as soon as possible. D'Estaing adhered to the latter order, went up to the Château, and left the National Guard of Versailles to manage as it pleased. M. de Gouvernet, the second in command, likewise left his post, and placed himself among the body guards, pre-

ferring, he said, to be with people who know how to fight and *sabre*. Lecointre, the lieutenant-colonel, remained alone to command.

Meanwhile, Maillard arrived at the National Assembly. All the women wanted to enter. He had the greatest trouble to prevail on them to send in only fifteen of their number. They placed themselves at the bar, having at their head the French guardsman of whom we have spoken, a woman who carried a tambourine at the end of a pole, and the gigantic bailiff in the midst, in his tattered black coat, and sword in hand. The soldier began by portly telling the Assembly that, on no bread being found at the baker's that morning, he had wanted to ring the tocsin; that he had near been hanged, and owed his safety to the ladies who accompanied him. "We come," said he, "to demand bread, and the punishment of the body guard who have insulted the cockade. We are good patriots; on our road we have torn down the black cockades, and I will have the pleasure of tearing one before the Assembly."

To which the other gravely added: "Everybody must certainly wear the patriotic cockade." This was received with a few murmurs.

"And yet we are all brethren!" cried the sinister apparition.

Maillard alluded to what the municipal council of Paris had declared the day before: that the tricolor cockade, having *been adopted as a symbol of fraternity*, was the only one that ought to be worn by citizens.

The women, being impatient, shouted together, "Bread! Bread!" Maillard then began to speak of the horrible situation of Paris, of the supplies being intercepted by the other towns, or by the aristocrats. "They want," said he, "to starve us. A miller has received from somebody two hundred francs to induce him not to grind, with a promise that he should receive as much every week." The Assembly exclaimed, "Name him." It was in the Assembly itself that Grégoire had spoken of that current report; and Maillard had heard of it on the road.

"Name him!" some of the women shouted at random: "It is the archbishop of Paris."

At that moment, when the lives of many men seemed hanging by a thread, Robespierre took a serious step. Alone, he

supported Maillard ; said that Abbé Grégoire had spoken of the fact, and would doubtless give some information.*

Other members of the Assembly tried threats and caresses. A deputy of the clergy, an *abbé*, or a prelate, offered his hand to one of the women to kiss. She flew into a passion, and said, "I was not made to kiss a dog's paw." Another deputy, a military man, and wearing the cross of Saint-Louis, hearing Maillard say that the clergy were the grand obstacle to the constitution, exclaimed, in a passion, that he ought instantly to be punished as an example. Maillard, nothing daunted, replied that he inculcated no member of the Assembly ; that the Assembly were doubtless ignorant of all ; and that he thought he was doing them a service in giving them this information. For the second time, Robespierre supported Maillard, and calmed the anger of the women. Those outside were growing impatient, fearing for the safety of their orator. A report was spreading among them that he had perished. He went out for a moment, and showed himself.

Maillard, then resuming his speech, begged the Assembly to engage the National Guards to make atonement for the insult offered to the cockade. Some deputies gave him the lie. Maillard insisted in unceremonious language. Mounier, the president, reminded him of the respect due to the Assembly ; and added, foolishly, that they who wished to be citizens were perfectly at liberty to be so. This gave an advantage to Maillard ; he replied : "Everybody ought to be proud of the name of citizen ; and if, in that august assembly, there were anybody who considered it a dishonour, he ought to be excluded." The Assembly started with emotion, and applauded : "Yes," cried they, "we are all citizens !"

At that moment a tricolored cockade was brought in, sent by the body guard. The women shouted, "God save the king and the body guard !" Maillard, who was not so easily satisfied, insisted on the necessity of sending away the regiment of Flanders.

Mounier, then hoping to be able to get rid of them, said that the Assembly had neglected nothing to obtain provisions,

* All this has been disfigured and curtailed by the *Moniteur*. Luckily, it gives later the depositions (at the end of the 1st volume). See also the *Deux Amis de la Liberté*, Ferrières, &c. &c.

neither had the king ; that they would try to find some new means, and that they might withdraw in peace. Maillard did not stir, saying, " No, that is not enough."

A deputy then proposed to go and inform the king of the miserable state of Paris. The Assembly voted it, and the women, eagerly seizing that hope, threw their arms round the necks of the deputies, and embraced the president in spite of his resistance.

" But where is our Mirabeau ?" said they, once more ; " we should like to see our Count de Mirabeau."

Mounier, surrounded, kissed, and almost stifled, then moodily set out with the deputation and a crowd of women, who insisted on following him. " We were on foot," says he, " in the mud, and it was raining in torrents. We had to pass through a ragged noisy multitude, armed in a fantastical manner. Body guards were patrolling and galloping about. Those guards on beholding Mounier and the deputies, with their strange *cortège* of honour, imagined they saw there the leaders of the insurrection, and wanting to disperse that multitude, galloped through them."* The *invincible* deputies escaped as they could, and ran for their lives through the mud. It is easy to conceive the rage of the people, who had imagined that, with them, they were sure of being respected !

Two women were wounded, and even by swords, according to some witnesses.† However, the people did nothing. From three till eight in the evening, they were patient and motionless, only shouting and hooting whenever they beheld the odious uniform of the body guard. A child threw stones.

The king had been found ; he had returned from Meudon, without hurrying himself. Mounier, being at length recognised, was allowed to enter with twelve women. He spoke to the king of the misery of Paris, and to the ministers of the request of the Assembly, who were waiting for the pure and simple acceptance of the Declaration of Rights and other constitutional articles.

Meanwhile the king listened to the women with much kindness. The young girl, Louison Chabry, had been charged to

* See Mounier, at the end of the *Exposé justificatif*.

† If the king forbade the troops to act, as people affirm, it was at a later period, and too late.

speak for the others ; but her emotion was so great in presence of the king, that she could only articulate " Bread ! " and fell down in a swoon. The king, much affected, ordered her to be taken care of ; and when, on departing, she wanted to kiss his hand, he embraced her like a father.

She ran out a Royalist, and shouting "*Vive le Roi !*" The women, who were waiting for her in the square, were furious, and began saying she had been bribed ; in vain did she turn her pockets inside out, to shew that she had no money ; the women tied their garters round her neck to strangle her. She was torn from them, but not without much difficulty. She was obliged to return to the Château, and obtain from the king a written order to send for corn, and remove every obstacle for the provisioning of Paris.

To the demands of the president, the king had coolly replied : " Return about nine o'clock." Mounier had nevertheless remained at the castle, at the door of the council, insisting on having an answer, knocking every hour, till ten in the evening. But nothing was decided.

The minister of Paris, M. de Saint-Priest, had heard the news very late (which proves how indecisive and spontaneous the departure for Versailles had been). He proposed that the queen should depart for Rambouillet, and that the king should remain, resist, and fight if necessary ; the departure of the queen alone would have quieted the people and rendered fighting unnecessary. M. Necker wanted the king to go to Paris, and trust himself to the people ; that is to say, that he should be sincere and frank, and accept the Revolution. Louis XVI., without coming to any resolution, dismissed the council, in order to consult the queen.

She was very willing to depart, but with him, and not to leave such an indecisive man to himself ; the name of the king was her weapon for beginning the civil war. Saint-Priest heard, about seven o'clock, that Lafayette, urged by the National Guard, was marching against Versailles. " We must depart immediately," said he ; " the king at the head of the troops will pass without any difficulty." But it was impossible to bring him to any decision. He believed (but very wrongly) that, if he departed, the Assembly would make the Duke of Orleans king. He was also adverse to flight ; he strode to and fro,

repeating from time to time: "A king a fugitive! a king a fugitive!"* The queen, however, having insisted on departing, the order was given for the carriages. It was too late.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING BROUGHT BACK TO PARIS.

The 5th of October continued.—First Blood shed.—The Women gain over the Regiment of Flanders.—Fight between the Body Guard and the National Guard of Versailles.—The King no longer able to escape.—Affright of the Court.—The Women pass the Night in the Hall of the Assembly.—Lafayette forced to march against Versailles.—6th of October.—The Château assailed.—Danger of the Queen.—The Body Guards saved by the French Ex-Guards.—Excitation of the Assembly.—Conduct of the Duke of Orleans.—The King led to Paris.

ONE of the Paris militia, whom a crowd of women had taken, in spite of himself, for their leader, and who excited by the journey, had shown himself at Versailles more enthusiastic than all the others, ventured to pass behind the body guard there: seeing the iron gate shut, he began insulting the sentinel stationed within, and menacing him with his bayonet. A lieutenant of the guard and two others drew their swords, and galloped after him. The man ran for his life, tried to reach a shed, but tumbled over a tub, still shouting for assistance. The horseman had come up with him, just as the National Guard of Versailles could contain themselves no longer: one of them, a retail wine-merchant, stepped from the ranks, aimed, fired, and stopped him short; he had broken the arm that held the uplifted sabre.

D'Estaing, the commander of this National Guard, was at the castle, still believing that he was to depart with the king. Lecointre, the lieutenant-colonel, remained on the spot demanding orders of the municipal council, who gave none. He was justly fearful lest that famished multitude should overrun the town and feed themselves. He went to them, inquired what quantity of provisions was necessary, and entreated the council

* See Necker, and his daughter, Madame de Staël's *Considérations*.

to give them ; but could only obtain a little rice, which was nothing for such a multitude. Then he caused a search to be made in every direction, and, by his laudable diligence, gave some relief to the people.

At the same time, he addressed himself to the regiment of Flanders, and asked the officers and soldiers whether they would fire. The latter were already under a far more powerful influence. Women had cast themselves among them, entreating them not to hurt the people. A woman then appeared among them, whom we shall often see again, who seemed not to have walked in the mire with the others, but had, doubtless, arrived later, and who now threw herself at once among the soldiers. This was a handsome young lady, Mademoiselle Théroigne de Méricourt, a native of Liege, lively and passionate, like so many of the women of Liege who effected the Revolution of the fifteenth century,* and fought valiantly against Charles the Bold. Interesting, original, and strange, with her riding-habit and hat, and a sabre by her side, speaking and confounding equally French and the *patois* of Liege, and yet eloquent. She was laughable, yet irresistible. Théroigne, impetuous, charming, and terrible, was insensible to every obstacle. She had had amours ; but then she felt but one passion,—one violent and mortal, which cost her more than life,† her love for the Revolution ; she followed it with enthusiasm, never missed a meeting of the Assembly, frequented the clubs and the public places, held a club at her own house, and received many deputies. She would have no more lovers, and declared that she would have none but the great metaphysician, the abstract, cold Abbé Sieyès, ever the enemy of women.

Théroigne, having addressed that regiment of Flanders, bewildered, gained them over, and disarmed them so completely that they gave away their cartridges like brothers to the National Guard of Versailles.

D'Estaing then sent word to the latter to withdraw. A few departed ; others replied that they would not go till the body guards had first moved. The latter were then ordered to file off. It was eight o'clock, and the evening was dark. The

* See my *Histoire de France*, t. vi.

† A tragical story, terribly disfigured by Beaulieu and all the royalists. I entreat the people of Liege to defend the honour of their heroine.

people followed, pressed upon the body guards, and hooted after them. The guards force their way sword in hand. Some who were behind, being more molested than the rest, fired their pistols: three of the National Guard were hit, one in the face; the two others received the bullets in their clothes. Their comrades fire also by way of answer; and the body guard reply with their musketoons.

Other National Guards entered the court-yard, surrounded d'Estaing, and demanded ammunition. He was himself astonished at their enthusiasm and the boldness they displayed amid the troops: "True martyrs of enthusiasm," said he subsequently to the queen.*

A lieutenant of Versailles declared to the guard of the artillery, that if he did not give him some gunpowder, he would blow his brains out. He gave him a barrel which was opened on the spot; and they loaded some cannon which they pointed opposite the balustrade, so as to take in flank the troops which still covered the castle, and the body guards who were returning to the square.

The people of Versailles had shown the same firmness on the other side of the Château. Five carriages drew up to the iron gates in order to depart; they said it was the queen, who was going to Trianon. The Swiss opened, but the guards shut. "It would be dangerous for her Majesty," said the commandant, "to leave the Château." The carriages were escorted back. There was no longer any chance of escape. The king was a prisoner.

The same commandant saved one of the body guard whom the crowd wanted to tear to pieces, for having fired on the people. He managed so well that they left the man; they were satisfied with tearing the horse to pieces; and they began roasting him on the *Place D'Armes*; but the crowd were too hungry to wait, and devoured it almost raw.

It was a rainy night. The crowd took shelter where they could; some burst open the gates of the great stables (*grandes écuries*), where the regiment of Flanders was stationed, and mixed pell-mell with the soldiers. Others, about four thousand in number, had remained in the Assembly. The men were

* See one of his letters at the end of vol. iii. of *Deux Amis de la Liberté*.

quiet enough, but the women were impatient at that state of inaction : they talked, shouted, and made an uproar. Maillard alone could keep them quiet, and he managed to do so only by haranguing the Assembly.

What contributed to incense the crowd, was that the body guards came to the dragoons, who were at the doors of the Assembly, to ask whether they would assist them in seizing the cannon that menaced the Château. The people were about to rush upon them, when the dragoons contrived to let them escape.

At eight o'clock, there was another attempt. They brought a letter from the king, in which, without speaking of the Declaration of Rights, he promised in vague terms to allow corn to circulate freely. It is probable that, at that moment, the idea of flight was predominant at the Château. Without giving any answer to Mounier, who still remained at the door of the council, they sent this letter to engage the attention of the impatient crowd.

A singular apparition had added to the affright of the Court. A young man enters, ill-dressed, like one of the mob, and quite aghast.* Everybody was astonished ; it was the young Duke of Richelieu who, in that disguise, had mingled with the crowd, a fresh swarm of people who had marched from Paris ; he had left them half way on the road in order to give warning to the royal family ; he had heard horrible language, atrocious threats, which made his hair stand on end. In saying this, he was so livid, that everybody turned pale.

The king's heart was beginning to fail him ; he perceived that the queen was in peril. However agonizing it was to his conscience to consecrate the legislative work of philosophy, at ten o'clock in the evening he signed the Declaration of Rights.

Mounier was at last able to depart. He hastened to resume his place as president before the arrival of that vast army from Paris, whose projects were not yet known. He re-entered the hall ; but there was no longer any Assembly ; it had broken up : the crowd, ever growing more clamorous and exacting, had demanded that the prices of bread and meat should be lowered.

* *Stall, Considérations*, 2nd part, ch. xi.

Mounier found in his place, in the president's chair, a tall fine well-behaved woman, holding the bell in her hand, and who left the chair with reluctance. He gave orders that they were to try to collect the deputies again; meanwhile, he announced to the people that the king had just accepted the constitutional articles. The women crowding about him, then entreated him to give them copies of them; others said: "But, M. President, will this be very advantageous? Will this give bread to the poor people of Paris?" Others exclaimed: "We are very hungry. We have eaten nothing to-day." Mounier ordered bread to be fetched from the bakers'. Provisions then came in on all sides. They all began eating in the hall with much clamour.

The women, whilst eating, chatted with Mounier: "But, dear President, why did you defend that villanous *veto* ? Mind the *lanterne!*" Mounier replied firmly, that they were not able to judge,—that they were mistaken; that, for his part, he would rather expose his life than betray his conscience. This reply pleased them very much, and from that moment they showed him great respect and friendship.*

Mirabeau alone would have been able to obtain a hearing, and silence the uproar. He did not care to do so. He was certainly uneasy. According to several witnesses, he had walked about in the evening among the people, with a large sabre, saying to those he met, "Children, we are for you." Afterwards, he had gone to bed. Dumont, the Genevese, went in quest of him, and brought him back to the Assembly. As soon as he arrived, he called out, in his voice of thunder, "I should like to know how people have the assurance to come and trouble our meeting. M. President, make them respect the Assembly!" The women shouted "Bravo!" They became more quiet. In order to kill time, they resumed the discussion on the criminal laws.

'Twas in a gallery (says Dumont) where a fish-woman was acting as commander-in-chief, and directing about a hundred women, especially girls, who, at a signal from her, shouted or remained silent. She was calling the deputies familiarly by their names, or else would inquire, "Who is that speaking

* Mounier, at the end of the *Exposé justificatif*.

yonder? Make that chatterbox hold his prating! That is not the question! The thing is to have bread! Let them rather hear our darling little Mirabeau!" Then all the women would shout, "Our darling mother Mirabeau!" But he would not speak.*

Lafayette, who had left Paris between five and six in the evening, did not arrive till after twelve. We must now go back, and follow him from noon to midnight.

About eleven, being informed that the Hôtel-de-Ville was invaded, he repaired thither, found the crowd dispersed, and began dictating a despatch for the king. La Grève was full of the paid and unpaid National Guards, who were muttering from rank to rank that they ought to march to Versailles. Many French ex-guards, especially, regretted having lost their ancient privilege of guarding the king, and wanted to recover it. Some of them went to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and knocked at the bureau, where Lafayette was dictating. A handsome young grenadier, who spoke admirably, said to him firmly:

"My General, the people are without bread; misery is extreme. The committee of subsistence either deceives you, or are themselves deceived. This state of things cannot last; there is but one remedy: let us go to Versailles. They say the king is a fool; we will place the crown on the head of his son; a council of regency shall be named, and everything will go on better."

Lafayette was very firm and obstinate, but the crowd was still more so. He believed very properly in his influence over the people; he was, however, able to see that he had over-rated it. In vain did he harangue the people; in vain did he remain several hours in the Grève on his white horse, sometimes speaking, sometimes imposing silence with a gesture, or else, by way of having something to do, patting his horse with his hand. The difficulty was growing more urgent; it was no longer his National Guards who pressed him, but bodies from the Faubourgs Saint-Antoine and Saint-Marceau,—men who would listen to nothing. They spoke to the general by eloquent signs, preparing the lamp for him, and taking aim at him. Then he got down from his horse, and wanted to re-enter the

* Etienne Dumont, *Souvenirs*, p. 181.

Hôtel-de-Ville ; but his grenadiers barred the passage : “ *Morbleu ! general,*” said they, “ you shall stop with us ; you would not abandon us ! ”

Luckily, a letter is brought down from the Hôtel-de-Ville ; they authorise the general to depart, “ seeing it is impossible to refuse.” “ Let us march,” said he, though he did so with regret. The order was received with shouts of joy.

Of the thirty thousand men of the National Guard, fifteen thousand marched forth. Add to this number a few thousands of the people. The insult offered to the national cockade was a noble motive for the expedition. Everybody applauded them on their passage. An elegantly-dressed assemblage on the terrace by the water-side looked on and applauded. At Passy, where the Duke of Orleans had hired a house, Madame de Genlis was at her post, shouting, and waving her handkerchief, doing all she could to be seen. The bad weather caused them to march rather slowly. Many of the National Guards, so eager before, now began to cool. This was not like the fine weather on the 14th of July. They were drenched with a cold October rain. Some of them stopped on the road ; others grumbled, and walked on. “ It is disagreeable,” said the rich tradesmen, “ for people who go to their country-houses in fine weather only in coaches, to march four leagues in the rain.” Others said, “ We will not do all this drudgery for nothing.” And they then laid all the blame on the queen, uttering mad threats, and appearing very malignant. The Château had been expecting them in the greatest anxiety. They thought that Lafayette only pretended that he was forced, but that really he availed himself willingly of the opportunity. They wanted to see whether, at eleven o'clock, the crowd being then dispersed, the carriages could pass through the Dragon gates. The National Guard of Versailles was on the watch and blocked the passage.

The queen, however, would not depart alone. She rightly judged that there was no safe refuge for her, if she separated from the king. About two hundred noblemen, several of whom were deputies, offered themselves to defend her, and asked her for an order to take horses from her stables. She authorised them, in case, she said, the king should be in danger.

Lafayette, before entering Versailles, made his troops renew

their oath of fidelity to the law and the king. He sent him notice of his arrival, and the king replied : " that he would see him with pleasure, and that he had just accepted *his* Declaration of Rights."

Lafayette entered the Château alone, to the great astonishment of the guards and everybody else. In the *œil-de-bœuf*, one of the courtiers was so foolish as to say : " There goes Cromwell." To which Lafayette replied very aptly, " Sir, Cromwell would not have entered alone."

" He appeared very calm," says Madame De Staël (who was present); " nobody ever saw him otherwise; his modesty suffered from the importance of his position." The stronger he appeared, the more respectful was his behaviour. The outrage, moreover, to which he had been subjected, made him more of a Royalist than ever.

The king intrusted to the National Guard the outer posts of the castle; the body guards preserved those within. Even the outside was not entirely intrusted to Lafayette. On one of his patrols wishing to pass into the park, the entrance was refused. The park was occupied by body guards and other troops; till two in the morning* they awaited the king, in case he should at last resolve to fly. At two o'clock only, having been pacified by Lafayette, they told them they might go to Rambouillet.

The Assembly had broken up at three o'clock. The people had dispersed, and retired to rest, as they could, in the churches and elsewhere. Maillard and many of the women, among whom was Louison Chabry, had departed for Paris, shortly after the arrival of Lafayette, carrying with them the decrees on corn and the Declaration of Rights.

Lafayette had much trouble to find lodging for his National Guards; wet, and worn out, they were trying to dry themselves and to get food. At last, believing everything quiet, he also went to the Hôtel de Noailles, and slept, as a man sleeps after twenty hours' fatigue and agitation.

Many people did not sleep: especially those who having come from Paris in the evening, had not undergone the fatigue of the preceding day. The first expedition, in which the women

* Till that hour, they still thought of doing so, if we may believe the testimony of M. de la Tour-du-Pin.—*Mémoires de Lafayette*, ii.

were predominant, being very spontaneous, natural as it were, and urged by necessity, had not cost any bloodshed. Maillard had had the glory of maintaining some sort of order in that disorderly crowd. The natural *crescendo* ever observable in such insurrections, scarcely left room to hope that the second expedition would pass off as quietly. True, it had been formed before the eyes of the National Guard, and as if in concert with it. Nevertheless there were men there who were determined to act without them; many were furious fanatics, who would have liked to kill the queen;* others who pretended to be so, and seemed to be the most violent, were simply a class of men ever superabundant when the police is weak, namely, thieves. The latter calculated the chances of breaking into the Château. They had not found much in the Bastille worth taking. But, what a delightful prospect was opened for pillage in the wonderful palace of Versailles, where the riches of France had been amassed for more than a century!

At five in the morning, before daylight, a large crowd was already prowling about the gates, armed with pikes, spits, and scythes. They had no guns. Seeing some body guards as sentinels at the gates, they forced the National Guards to fire on them; the latter obeyed, taking care to fire too high.

In that crowd, wandering or standing round fires that had been made in the square, was a little hump-backed lawyer, Verrières, mounted on a large horse; he was considered very violent; they had been waiting for him ever since the preceding evening, saying they would do nothing without him. Lecointre was likewise there, going to and fro haranguing the crowd. The people of Versailles were perhaps more inveterate than the Parisians, having been long enraged against the court and the body guards; they had lost an opportunity, the night before, of falling on them, which they regretted, and wanted now to pay them what they owed them. Among them were several locksmiths and blacksmiths, (of the manufactory of

* I do not see in the *Ami du peuple* how Marat can be accused of having been the first to suggest sanguinary violence. What is certain is he was very restless: "M. Marat flies to Versailles, returns like lightning and makes alone as much noise as the four trumpets of the Day of Judgment, shouting: 'O death! arise!'"—Camille Desmoulins, *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, iii., p. 359.

arms?) rough men, who strike hard, and who, moreover, ever thirsty at the forge, are also hard drinkers.

About six o'clock, this crowd, composed of Parisians and people of Versailles, scale or force the gates, and advance into the courts with fear and hesitation. The first who was killed, if we believe the Royalists, died from a fall, having slipped in the marble court. According to another and a more likely version, he was shot dead by the body guard.

Some took to the left, toward the queen's apartment, others to the right, toward the chapel stairs, nearer the king's apartment. On the left, a Parisian running unarmed, among the foremost, met one of the body guard, who stabbed him with a knife. The guardsman was killed. On the right, the foremost was a militia-man of the guard of Versailles, a diminutive locksmith, with sunken eyes, almost bald, and his hands chapped by the heat of the forge.* This man and another, without answering the guard, who had come down a few steps and was speaking to him on the stairs, strove to pull him down by his belt, and hand him over to the crowd rushing behind. The guards pulled him towards them; but two of them were killed. They all fled along the grand gallery, as far as the *cœil-de-bœuf*, between the apartments of the king and the queen. Other guards were already there.

The most furious attack had been made in the direction of the queen's apartment. The sister of her *femme-de-chambre* Madame de Campan, having half opened the door, saw a guardsman covered with blood, trying to stop the furious rabble. She quickly bolted that door and the next, put a petticoat on the queen, and tried to lead her to the king. An awful moment! The door was bolted on the other side! They knock again and again. The king was not within; he had gone round by another passage to reach the queen. At that moment a pistol was fired, and then a gun, close to them. "My friends, my dear friends," cried the queen, bursting into tears, "save me and my children." They brought her the dauphin. At length the door was opened, and she rushed into the king's apartment.

* Deposition of Miomandre, one of the body guards.—*Moniteur*, i., p. 566.

The crowd was knocking louder and louder to enter the *œil-de-bœuf*. The guards barricaded the place, piling up benches, stools, and other pieces of furniture; the lower panel was burst in. They expected nothing but death; but suddenly the uproar ceased, and a kind clear voice exclaimed: "Open!" As they did not obey, the same voice repeated: "Come, open to us, body guard; we have not forgotten that you men saved us French Guards at Fontenoy."

It was indeed the French Guards, now become National Guards, with the brave and generous Hoche, then a simple sergeant-major—it was the people, who had come to save the nobility. They opened, threw themselves into one another's arms, and wept.

At that moment, the king, believing the passage forced, and mistaking his saviours for his assassins, opened his door himself, by an impulse of courageous humanity, saying to those without: "Do not hurt my guards."

The danger was past, and the crowd dispersed; the thieves alone were unwilling to be inactive. Wholly engaged in their own business, they were pillaging and moving away the furniture. The grenadiers turned that rabble out of the castle.

A scene of horror was passing in the court. A man with a long beard was chopping with a hatchet to cut off the heads of two dead bodies,—the guards killed on the stairs. That wretch, whom some took for a famous brigand of the south, was merely a *modèle* who used to sit at the Academy of Painting; for that day, he had put on the picturesque costume of an antique slave, which astonished everybody, and added to their fear.*

* His name was Nicolas. According to his landlord, the man had never given any proof of violence or ill-nature. Children used to take that terrible man by the beard. He was in fact a vain half-silly person who fancied he was doing something grand, audacious, and original, and perhaps wanted to realize the bloody scenes he had beheld in pictures or at the theatre. When he had committed the horrible deed, and everybody had recoiled from him, he suddenly felt the dreariness of that strange solitude, and sought, under different pretexts, to get into the conversation, asking a servant for a pinch of snuff, and a Swiss of the castle for some wine, which he paid for, boasting, and trying to encourage and comfort himself.—See the depositions in the *Moniteur*. The heads were carried to Paris on pikes; one by a child. According to some, they departed the same morning; others say, a little before the king, and,

Lafayette, awakened but too late, then arrived on horseback. He saw one of the body guards whom they had taken and dragged near the body of one of those killed by the guards, in order to kill him by way of retaliation. "I have given my word to the king," cried Lafayette, "to save his men. Cause my word to be respected." The man was saved; not so Lafayette. A furious fellow cried out: "Kill him!" He gave orders to have him arrested, and the obedient crowd dragged him accordingly towards the general, dashing his head against the pavement.

He then entered the castle. Madame Adelaide, the king's aunt, went up to him and embraced him: "It is you," cried she, "who have saved us." He ran to the king's cabinet. Who would believe that etiquette still subsisted? A grand officer stopped him for a moment, and then allowed him to pass: "Sir," said he seriously, "the king grants you *les grandes entrées*."

The king showed himself at the balcony, and was welcomed with the unanimous shout of "God save the King! *Vive le Roi!*"

"The King at Paris!" was the second shout, which was taken up by the people, and repeated by the whole army.

The queen was standing near a window with her daughter beside her, and the dauphin before her. The child, playing with his sister's hair, cried: "Mamma, I am hungry!" O hard reaction of necessity! Hunger passes from the people to the king! O Providence! Providence! Pardon! This one is but a child!

At that moment several voices raised a formidable shout: "The queen!" The people wanted to see her in the balcony. She hesitated: "What!" said she, "all alone?" "Madam, be not afraid," said Lafayette. She went, but not alone, holding an admirable safeguard,—in one hand her daughter, in the other her son. The court of marble was terrible, in awful commotion, like the sea in its fury; the National Guards, lining every side, could not answer for the centre; there were

consequently, in presence of Lafayette, which is not likely. The body guard had killed five men of the crowd or National Guards of Versailles, and the latter seven body guards,

fire-arms, and men blind with rage. Lafayette's conduct was admirable ; for that trembling woman, he risked his popularity, his destiny, his very life ; he appeared with her on the balcony, and kissed her hand.*

The crowd felt all that ; the emotion was unanimous. They saw there the woman and the mother, nothing more. " Oh ! how beautiful she is ! What ! is that the queen ? How she fondles her children ! " Noble people ! may God bless you for your clemency and forgetfulness !

The king was trembling with fear, when the queen went to the balcony. The step having succeeded : " My guards," said he to Lafayette, " could you not also do something for them ? " " Give me one." Lafayette led him to the balcony, told him to take the oath, and show the national cockade in his hat. The guard kissed it, and the people shouted : "*Vivent les gardes-du-corps !*" The grenadiers, for more safety, took the caps of the guards, and gave them theirs, so that, by this mixture of costume, the people could no longer fire on the guards without running the risk of killing them.

The king was very reluctant to quit Versailles. To leave the royal residence was in his estimation the same thing as to abandon royalty. A few days before, he had rejected the entreaties of Malouet and other deputies, who in order to be further from Paris, had begged him to transfer the Assembly to Compiègne. And now, he must leave Versailles to go to Paris,—pass through that terrible crowd. What would befall the queen ? He shuddered to think.

The king sent to entreat the Assembly to meet at the Château. Once there, the Assembly and the king being together, and supported by Lafayette, some of the deputies were to beseech the king not to go to Paris. That request

* By far the most curious deposition is that of the woman La Varenne,—the valiant portress of whom we have spoken. Therein we may perceive how a legend begins. This woman was an eye-witness,—had a hand in the business ; she received a wound in saving one of the body guard ; and she sees and hears whatever is uppermost in her mind ; she adds it honestly : " The queen appeared in the balcony ; M. de Lafayette said : ' The queen has been deceived. She *promises to love her people*, to be attached to them, as Jesus Christ is to his Church.' And as a token of approval, the queen, shedding tears, twice raised her hand. The king asked pardon for his guards," &c.

was to have been represented to the people as the wish of the Assembly. All that great commotion would subside ; fatigue, lassitude, and hunger would gradually disperse the people ; they would depart of their own accord.

The Assembly, which was then forming, appeared wavering and undecided.

Nobody had any fixed resolution or determination. That popular movement had taken all by surprise. The most keen-sighted had expected nothing of this. Mirabeau had not foreseen it, neither had Sièyes. The latter said pettishly, when he received the first tidings of it : " I cannot understand it ; it is going all wrong."

I think he meant to say : " contrary to the Revolution." Sièyes, at that time, was still a revolutionist, and perhaps rather favourably inclined towards the branch of Orleans. For the king to quit Versailles, his old court, and live at Paris among the people, was, doubtless, a fine chance for Louis XVI. to become popular again. If the queen (killed, or in exile) had not followed him, the Parisians would, very probably, have felt an affection for the king. They had, at all times, entertained a predilection for that fat, good-tempered man, whose very corpulency gave him an air of pious paternal good-nature, quite to the taste of the crowd. We have already seen that the market-women used to call him a *good papa* : that was the very idea of the people.

This removal to Paris, which so much frightened the king, frightened, in a contrary manner, such as wanted to strengthen and continue the Revolution, and, still more, those who, for patriotic or personal views, would have liked to make the Duke of Orleans lieutenant-general (or something better.)

The very worst thing that could have happened for the latter, who was foolishly accused of wishing to kill the queen, was, that the queen should have been killed, and that the king, freed from that living cause of unpopularity, should return to Paris, and fall into the hands of such men as Bailly or Lafayette.

The Duke of Orleans was perfectly innocent of the movement of the 5th of October. He could neither help it, nor take advantage of it. On the 5th and the following night, he went restlessly from place to place. Depositions prove that he was seen everywhere between Paris and Versailles, but

that he did nothing.* Between eight and nine in the morning of the 6th, so soon after the massacre, that the court of the castle was still stained with blood, he went and showed himself to the people, with an enormous cockade in his hat, laughing, and flourishing a switch in his hand.

To return to the Assembly. There were not forty members who repaired to the castle. Most of them were already in the entrance hall, and rather undecided how to act. The crowds of persons who thronged the tribunes increased their indecision. At the first word said about sitting at the Château, they began vociferating. Mirabeau then arose, and, according to his custom of disguising his obedience to the people in haughty language, said, "that the liberty of the Assembly would be compromised if they deliberated in the palace of kings; that it did not become their dignity to quit their usual place of meeting; and that a deputation was sufficient." Young Barnave supported the motion. Mounier, the president, opposed it, but in vain.

At length, they heard that the king had consented to depart for Paris; the Assembly, on Mirabeau's proposition, voted, that, for their present session, they are inseparable from the king.

The day was advancing. It was not far from one o'clock. They must depart, and quit Versailles. Farewell to ancient monarchy!

A hundred deputies surround the king; a whole army,—a whole people. He departs from the palace of Louis XIV., never to return.

The whole multitude begins to move: they march off towards Paris, some before the king, and some behind. Men and women, all go as they can, on foot or on horseback, in coaches and carts, on carriages of cannon, or whatever they could find. They had the good fortune to meet with a large convoy of flour,—a blessing for the famished town. The women carried large loaves on pikes, others, branches of poplar, already tinted

* All that he appears to have done, was to authorise the purveyor of the Assembly, on the evening of the 5th, to furnish provisions to the people who were in the hall. There is nothing to show that he acted, to any extent, from the 15th of July to the 5th of October, except in an awkward and weak attempt which Danton made in his favour with Lafayette.—See the *Mémoires* of the latter.

by autumn. They were all very merry, and amiable in their own fashion, except a few jokes addressed to the queen. "We are bringing back," cried they, "the baker, his wife, and the little shop-boy." They all thought they could never starve, as long as they had the king with them. They were all still royalists, and full of joy at being able at length to put their *good papa* in good keeping: he was not very clever; he had broken his word; it was his wife's fault; but, once in Paris, good women would not be wanting, who would give him better advice.

The whole spectacle was at once gay, melancholy, joyous, and gloomy. They were full of hope, but the sky was overcast, and the weather unfortunately did not favour the holiday. The rain fell in torrents; they marched but slowly, and in muddy roads. Now and then, several fired off guns, by way of rejoicing, or to discharge their arms.

The royal carriage, surrounded by an escort, and with Lafayette at the door, moved like a hearse. The queen felt uneasy. Was it sure she should arrive? She asked Lafayette what he thought, and he inquired of Moreau de Méry, who, having presided at the Hôtel-de-Ville on the famous days of the taking of the Bastille, was well acquainted with the matter. He replied in these significant words: "I doubt whether the queen could arrive alone at the Tuileries; but, once at the Hôtel-de-Ville, she will be able to return."

Behold the king at Paris, in the place where he ought to be, in the very heart of France. Let us hope he will be worthy of it.

The Revolution of the 6th of October, necessary, natural, and justifiable, if any ever was; entirely spontaneous, unforeseen, and truly popular; belongs especially to the women, as that of the 14th of July does to the men. The men took the Bastille, and the women took the king.

On the 1st of October, everything was marred by the ladies of Versailles; on the 6th, all was repaired by the women of Paris.

